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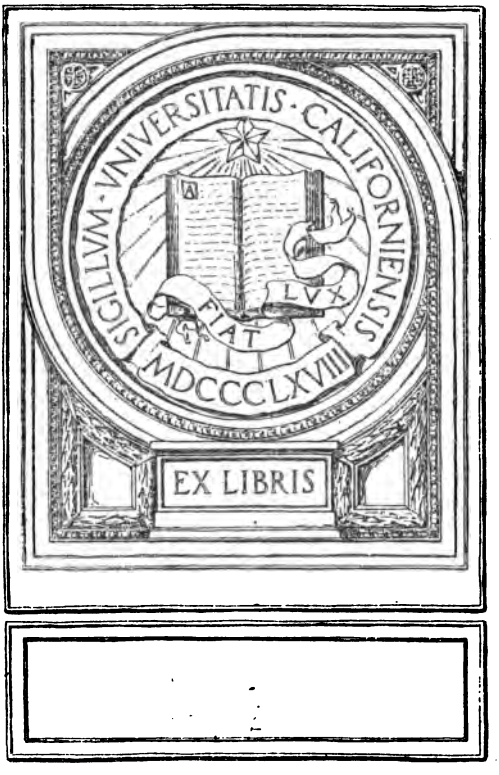

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VASSAR

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JAMES MONROE TAYLOR

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NEW YORK
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1915

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VASSAR

BY

JAMES MONROE TAYLOR

AND

ELIZABETH HAZELTON HAIGHT

Univ. of California

NEW YORK

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PREFATORY NOTE

When I was asked to write a history of Vassar, I found myself so engrossed with its actual administration as to make it seem impossible unless I could have collaboration. Miss Haight, alumna and member of the faculty, accepted the suggestion of this co-authorship. We have written different chapters, but have read and modified them together and have wrought them into a single book. We are both responsible, in like degree, for the contents of the volume.

An absence of due praise to individuals dear to memory will be felt by some readers. It has been a matter of self-denial on the part of the authors to refrain from the tributes that come spontaneously in thought of benefactors, colleagues, and alumnæ, but discrimination would be an ungrateful task, and it has seemed best to follow a uniform policy of reticence regarding the living. Of even the dead it must be said that discrimination is ungrateful and many a one who is less known to fame has given a service as praiseworthy as the most renowned.

The difficulty of writing the history of the College during one's own administration will be appreciated by everyone. I can only hope that the record will seem impersonal and fair, and as free from bias as we have tried to make it. Had the period not covered so large a part of the history of Vassar, it might have been omitted.

J. M. T.

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I

EARLIER COLLEGE EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

The Work of Emma Willard and Mary Lyon. Education for Women in the South. Georgia Female College. Mary Sharp College. Oberlin College. Antioch. Other Opportunities for Women in Ohio. Lombard University. The Attitude of State Universities. Elmira College.[1]

THE right of women to a full collegiate education was not first thought of when Matthew Vassar published his plan for a new college. How new it really was, and how original, we shall see,—but the novelty and originality of the idea were not independent of previous effort and argument. Like all great movements, this had no one beginning and is traceable to various sources, and Mr. Vassar's gift only focused and emphasized and confirmed the efforts of many pioneers. These were sporadic, of various degrees of value, generally small in their compass, and nowhere resulting in a large or conspicuous movement. It was still true, as the account of the reception of Mr. Vassar's project will show us, that the degree of interest in the right and duty of the higher education of girls was not such as to prepare the public mind for what seemed a crucial change in woman's position and ideals, or to free the new College from the most elementary contentions against the need and desirability of such education, or

[1] For fuller treatment of the subject of this chapter and for bibliography, see *Before Vassar Opened*, James Monroe Taylor, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914.

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the capacity of women to receive it and use it. Whatever was true of earlier efforts and achievements, the literature of the years of the charter and the beginnings of Vassar shows clearly that its opening doors disclosed a new epoch in the education of girls. The social and economic results of the Civil War furthered the new cause immensely, but the growth could not have been so immediate and so hopeful had it not been for the work of the pioneers in the South and in the North.

We are not here concerned with general, or secondary, education, and are seeking only the evidences of earlier collegiate training, but we may not pass over the great pioneer work of Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, Mary Lyon,—and a series of efforts of which these are types. These great leaders, however, made no pretense of establishing colleges, at Troy in 1821, at Hartford in 1822, at Holyoke in 1837. They were great and farsighted captains of the host. No document in our early educational history exceeds in importance Emma Willard's address to the Legislature of the State of New York, issued from Middlebury in 1819, and embodying a clear statement of the defects in the education of girls, and her own project for a female seminary. It surpasses anything then known or purposed, was honored with the advocacy of Jefferson and Adams, and won the favor of the Senate of New York. But the school was not of collegiate rank and did not assume to be. Mary Lyon, also, a woman of noble ideals and noble achievement, who saw clearly and wisely, and opened her seminary under a responsible board, after enormous sacrifices, knew that her great work was but a step toward the better era when women would have opportunities equal to those offered men,—and her requirements for admission and her curriculum of study

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were far from equaling those of the better colleges of the North and West.

At the South, the most colleges, though chartered and possessing often degree-conferring powers, were colleges only by courtesy and merely serve to illustrate a real interest in that section in the higher education of its girls. Indeed, as early as 1820, when Alabama was planning its university, it aimed to furnish opportunities to women. Nothing seems to have come of it, though ten years later the State petitioned Congress to grant land in each county for the founding of an academy for female education. We must not be misled by the term "college": even yet it is frequently used in the South for schools preparatory to college work. The question comes on the curriculum, faculty, library and laboratory equipment, and tried by these we must consign to the rank of seminaries almost all of the "colleges" of that section in the period before the war.

Only one indication has been found of an earlier claim than this futile one of Alabama. Blount College, in Tennessee, established in 1794, was coeducational, for a while,—a rare thing in the South,—but what its curriculum was, and whether any young women availed themselves of its privileges, or not, is unknown to us. Mississippi College is said to have granted degrees to two young women in 1832, but what the degree was is uncertain, as its records do not exist prior to 1836. The institution was coeducational till 1850. Earlier still, in 1819, Elizabeth Academy was chartered as a college, but the statement of the course of study is very elementary, though its completion entitled the graduate to a "diploma of parchment" for the degree *Domina Scientiarum*,—a fact which may throw light on the

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degrees of "Mississippi," and on its standards, as Mrs. Thayer, a Northern woman of seemingly great force and influence, had left the former institution and transferred her influence to the latter. These, however, such as they were, are the earliest degrees for women of which we find trace, and no better "college" education was offered in the South in that period, save in the two colleges to which more extended reference must be made.

The more prominent of these is the Georgia Female College, now the Wesleyan Female College, of Macon, chartered in 1836 and graduating its first class in 1840, and without a break in its history, even during the Civil War. Unhappily its records were destroyed by fire and it is impossible to learn with much exactness what were its requirements and what its standard of graduation. It claims to be the oldest institution chartered to confer degrees on women in America, but unless we rule out the Elizabeth Academy, and exclude the Mississippi College, as coeducational, this claim cannot stand.

Now we do not know what the degrees conferred by Georgia in 1840 were. At the semicentennial, Mrs. Benson, the first graduate, handed back her diploma to the trustees. It states that she was deemed worthy of "the first degree conferred by this institution," but there is no further specification. Mrs. Benson declared that the degree of A.B. was conferred on her, but the diploma does not mention it, unless the phrase is equivalent to our "first degree in arts." This is doubtful, in view of the degree of D.S. already referred to as known in Mississippi.

Far more important is the query as to the course which led to the degree. The college opened for work

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in January, 1839. The studies of the senior class, as reported by an old paper, embraced "Natural Philosophy, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Astronomy, Botany as connected with Chemistry, Physiology and Geology, History, Ancient and Modern Languages." We need greater detail to judge of the standards involved. One chance indication leads us to question whether they approximated the well-articulated curriculum of our better colleges in 1840. The first class was formed from the pupils of an Institute, who accompanied their teacher who took a place in the faculty of the new college, and were there one year. Our knowledge of the general standards of these institutes as well as of the lack of exaction in their claims in the South of that era, would lead us to question whether "Georgia" measured up to the contemporary colleges. There is surely no trace in the few records we have of such a standard as that exacted at Oberlin, which was now educating women. There is a suggestion, too, of the seminary, in the language of the diploma, in defining the course of study as "embracing all the sciences which are usually taught in the colleges of the United States that refer and appropriately belong to female education in its most ample range."

The Mary Sharp College, of Winchester, Tenn., dates from 1851. Its early catalogues, happily preserved, give us more exact data than we have regarding "Georgia." The catalogue of 1853-54 records a president, a faculty of four, one of whom, still living, testifies that he "found his classes in good condition," that "some of them did remarkably well," and that "there were young ladies whose attainments could compare very favorably with classes at Brown." This is interesting as the word of a recent graduate of Brown, driven

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South by his health, and invited to this institution. There were fifty-nine in the college classes, only four of whom were seniors. The freshmen began algebra, Latin, geometry, ancient history. The sophomores read Vergil, commenced Greek, took botany, trigonometry, history. The juniors studied conic sections, Cicero, natural philosophy, history, Greek Testament, astronomy, chemistry. The seniors had Horace, the Acts (Greek), philosophy, ethics, history, criticism, science. Here are the outlines of a real curriculum, and a requirement of Greek for graduation. The Vermonter who presided for many years over the college aimed to give to girls "an education as thorough as their brothers have been acquiring at their colleges and universities." He makes an impassioned plea for women's education, for "the placing of the sister on an equality with the brother," for "the developing and unfolding of all the qualities of her mind, thus making her what she was designed to be by her Creator, a thinking, reflecting, reasoning being, capable of comparing and judging for herself and dependent upon none other for her free unbiased opinions."

The college was closed during the war, "the headquarters of the Federal soldiers and much abused," writes its oldest graduate. The later catalogues are less convincing and are boastful, claiming in 1881-82 superiority to all other schools for women! Evidently it was now a harder and a losing battle, and after its strong pioneer work it ceased to be. It had furnished the most developed curriculum known to us in a school of that era restricted to women, and it claims to be the first of such institutions to require Greek and Latin for the degree of A.B. No separate college for women then existed in the North.

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Judged by the standards of the better colleges of that day there was a very small amount of collegiate education for women in the South. There were no considerable endowments with their guarantee of independence, no large libraries, no generous equipment. The faculty of many so-called colleges consisted chiefly of the principal and his wife, and the school was a private institution with degree-conferring power. But there was effort, enthusiasm, vision, prophecy. It would be a generation, however, before any separate school for women could secure students prepared for the admission requirements of Michigan in 1841,—and these were weaker than those of Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia. That great university, however, did not receive women till 1870, and the priority in this coeducational work belongs to Oberlin. Oberlin was opened in 1833, and it offered its privileges to girls from its wonderful beginnings. At first it was evidently expected that "the useful branches taught in the best female seminaries" would absorb their interests, though the higher classes were open to them, "as shall best suit their sex and prospective employment." The standards of their department were not equal to those of the college. In 1836, the catalogue shows no women in the collegiate department. In 1838 there are four freshmen. It was an inevitable result, whatever the founders intended. The pioneer and economic conditions, and their familiarity with the New England school, and the simple, wholesome life they knew, forced all minor questions into the background, and gave the girls,—sometimes "females," sometimes "ladies,"—the advantages they wished. But the numbers seeking a college course were small, and the majority availed themselves of the "Ladies' Course," which carried no

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degree, and which asked but a single year's preparation in contrast with the three required for college. Only seventy-nine received the degree of A.B. up to 1865. But this was a college course, comparing well with the best in the country, as may be seen in the catalogue of 1839, where appear side by side the courses of Yale and Oberlin, "in order that the Christian public may be able to judge us fairly." It was no dilettante school where the juniors read five pages of Demosthenes for a lesson. If many of the conditions of life were raw, inchoate, lacking in the finer graces, the degree of study and learning lagging behind all the exterior accessories of learning, as Miss Blake thought,[1] yet the devotion and thoroughness, and exaltation of mental labor were such as to guarantee the soundest training. And Asa Mahan and Charles Finney were there! Coeducation was evidently a problem, though accepted, for Miss Blake found no common life to the girls and men outside the classroom, no walking together even from prayer-meetings, and in class and chapel they sat apart.

At Antioch, also, founded by Horace Mann, and opened in 1853, women were welcomed to every advantage of the college. The astonishing enthusiasm for education developed by this remarkable man in conditions that must be described as wretched, gave fame to this new school. President Hill, Mann's successor, afterward president of Harvard, assured Miss Blake that the undergraduate of Antioch could generally enter grade for grade at Harvard. There were accommodations, however, for "female students," such as making Greek optional, substituting physics for it, and there were "Teachers' Courses" and an "English

[1] Sophia Jex Blake, *Visit to Some American Schools and Colleges.*

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Course,"—which were meant to provide for all of less than college grade. From 1856 to 1865, only twenty-eight women graduated from college. The curriculum was of full collegiate grade according to American standards from 1850 to 1870.

Many other colleges in Ohio were open to girls, chiefly on denominational foundations, meager, for the most, in endowment and equipment, but earnest within their range, and preparing their restricted constituencies for the better day that was coming. They betoken a local interest in a fair education and a liberal spirit,—but the young women availing themselves of the opportunities were very few.

Two colleges were founded for girls only, in Ohio, in this early period. The Ohio Wesleyan Female College of Ohio dates from 1853. It had a good attendance, but a weak curriculum, which was not yet of full collegiate grade when it joined the University of Delaware in 1877. The Wesleyan Female College of Cincinnati was incorporated in 1842-43, by the Methodist denomination. The word " alumna " was coined for its third class, which organized an association. Its degrees were M.E.L. (Mistress of English Literature) and M.L.A. (Mistress of Liberal Arts), the latter marking the classical course. The degree was later changed to A.B. The curriculum included philosophy, evidences, the popular sciences, mathematics, the Latin reaching to Vergil, in the senior year, and the Greek to the New Testament. French, German, and Spanish were taught. This was distinctly below Oberlin and Antioch, and not nearly equal to Mary Sharp in 1853, but above the best seminaries of 1845. It was one of the definite efforts toward college education for women, and owed much to the labors of Catharine Beecher, Lyman Beecher, Calvin Stowe, and

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the " College of Teachers " composed of teachers of Cincinnati and the Mississippi Valley, who worked steadily toward the highest ideal for women.

There was a rapid expansion of the idea in the decade from 1850 to 1860. The coeducational practice was increasing. One of the most advanced efforts, judged by its curriculum, was at the Lombard University of Galesburg, Illinois,—whose second catalogue, 1852-54, includes in its college department " fourteen ladies " and " thirty-five gentlemen." It began Latin and Greek in college, allowed the substitution of French for a portion of the classics, and German for the calculus, analytical geometry, etc. To these evidences of a " ladies' course " may be added the offer of embroidery, needlework, waxwork, music, painting. In 1854-55, Italian is offered. Ambition is evidently a quality of the young college, and in 1855-56 it publishes admission requirements and a curriculum about equal to those of Harvard in 1870! Evidently from the decline in later catalogues, the course was superior to the conditions of the time. Coeducation is accepted, and seems to become a problem only in 1861 when it requires rules. " Those of different sexes may not visit each other in their rooms at any time," nor " take walks and rides together without permission," nor " enter the marriage relation while connected with the institution." A " ladies' course " appears in 1862, and in 1864 this has a specific degree, L.A. (Laureate of Arts). Up to this time there are eleven alumnæ, but of these five have B.S. (a year less than A.B.), and two L.A., showing a very limited appreciation, among the girls of the section, of a full college education. Butler College, Indianapolis, records four women graduates up to 1865, but its chief work was preparatory. Lawrence College, Wisconsin,

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organized a freshman class in 1853 and graduated two women in 1857 with A.B. Hillsdale, Michigan, graduated its first full-term class in 1860 on the basis of a good curriculum, whose spirit reminds one of Oberlin. Miss Blake thought it, in 1865, crude in general conditions and equal to Oberlin in its standards. These may serve as types of many colleges which were trying, with insufficient means and little popular encouragement, to educate girls in the period antedating the opening of Vassar.

It has been assumed by many that the great State universities were pioneers in this work for woman's college education, but the facts warrant no such conclusion. That should have been the logical result of their foundation, and it was especially demanded by the economic and social conditions which gave them birth. But Michigan did not admit women till 1870, and at Wisconsin women were treated with small consideration till 1866, and not till 1869 did a woman receive a degree, Ph.B. Iowa was in this respect exceptional. It seems to have admitted women to full privileges from 1860. One graduated in the college course in 1863, and three in 1864. The published requirements for admission are of high character and worthy of the best colleges. Later, in 1864-65, French and German may be substituted for Greek. In 1866, we find no woman graduate, but there were women in college, ten freshmen,—and one took her A.B. in 1867. Evidently there was no " movement " yet toward higher education for women, and Vassar graduated its first class in 1867.

One college stands out distinctly in the North, in this earlier period, as founded expressly for women. " Elmira " was chartered in 1855, on condition that no degree should be conferred without a course of study

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equivalent to that pursued in the colleges of New York State. A committee of five, representing as many college faculties, was appointed to prepare a course suitable to young women, to be equivalent in all respects to the college courses for men. The freshmen were to study Cicero's Orations, Greek Testament, algebra, astronomy, botany, history, and the English poets; the sophomores, Tacitus, Greek Testament and Homer, French, geometry, political economy, government, rhetoric, philosophy; the juniors, German or French, logic, Kames's criticism, English, philosophy, sciences, trigonometry; the seniors, Paley and Butler, mental science and moral philosophy, conic sections, astronomy (mathematical), German or French, English literature. Compared with the standards of that day, the college deserved the entire respect of the educational world, even though the curriculum was not equal to a few of those pursued by women at an earlier date. Possibly the oncoming of the war had its influence, but certainly this strong effort deserved more honor and attention than it received and justified a better support from its constituents. It reveals, however, how little the lump had yet been leavened. It met ridicule and reproach, one college president declaring it "foolish" to say that a woman could comprehend college mathematics or master the Greek verb, another, that it was "too ridiculous" to give a woman a "man's education," and a professor of philosophy declared that the effort to teach women his branch of study was "beyond his comprehension." Evidently the sporadic efforts, South and North, were not yet attracting much attention, and the movement was not focused. Indeed, Elmira, good as it was, needed more resources to meet the demand. In 1865, when Vassar opened, its faculty was still small and ill-paid, the budget

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for salaries being under $5,000, the real estate $90,000, the endowment $5,500, the funded debt $14,000. Ninety-four were graduated by 1864. The report of 1865 seems to denote a struggle, and some question of the possibility of maintaining the standards of its earliest years. "It has been somewhat difficult to arrange with entire satisfaction a college course of study for young ladies," but the college furnishes "an appropriate share of those elegant accomplishments which are so highly esteemed in social life."

Such were the conditions when Mr. Vassar announced his purpose. How novel and original it seemed to his contemporaries, and how little influence in the country at large had been gained for the higher education of women is clear from the popular reception of the scheme.

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II

THE FOUNDER

Parentage and Early Home. Migration to America. Farm near Poughkeepsie. The Beginning of the Brewing. Early Schooling. His First Business Venture. Return to the Brewery. Family Vicissitudes. A Fortune Made. Interest in Women's Education Awakened. The Founder's Own Ideas about the College. The First Founder's Day. Death at the College.

BEFORE we proceed to consider the facts about the foundation of the first endowed college for women in America, we must sketch the life of the man whose high privilege it was to devote his fortune to the making of Vassar College. By a curious providence, it was a man of little education who was led to make this great gift to education; a man of careful economies who was impelled to this broad generosity; a man without children who wished to educate future mothers; a man whose life had been narrow, full of drudgery, restricted in its outlook, who embraced the idea of giving to woman every opportunity which education could afford.

The life of Matthew Vassar falls naturally into two periods, the first covering the years up to the successful accumulating of his fortune; the second, his life in its relation to the conception and foundation of Vassar College. And the two periods represent two very different phases of the man's character: one, that shrewd, calculating business sense which enabled him by counting the pennies to save the thousands; the

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THE FOUNDER

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other, that aspiration towards fame and benevolence which made him willing to part with his property, and which educated the man himself by his own gift.

There is in the possession of Vassar College a small, cheap, blank book of ruled paper, in which, recorded in stiff handwriting, is the Founder's autobiography. The sentences, often fragmentary and misspelled, give in their simple narrative most vivid glimpses of the childhood, boyhood, and business life of Matthew Vassar. "Monday 4th, December 1866," the first page is dated and the account is headed with this explanation:

"A few reminiscences of my Life, many of which being only connected with my *business* relations I have omitted, and much besides of no interest to the public, and would not have written *these* but at the request of several friends with reference to the Institution of which I am the Founder."

One is tempted to quote much of the quaint story, but the facts must be condensed. The old Family Bible declared that Matthew Vassar was born on April 29, 1792, at East Tuddenham, County of Norfolk, Duffee Green, England.[1] Mr. Vassar's ancestors were of French origin, the name being spelled originally Vasseur or Le Vasseur. Matthew Vassar's great-grandfather had crossed to England and settled in the county of Norfolk to engage in agricultural pursuits. His grandson, James Vassar, and Anne Bennett were the parents of Matthew Vassar. Both James and his brother Thomas had proved thrifty and successful farmers and had been able to save some few hundred pounds sterling when they decided in 1796 to move to America. They seem to have been led to this decision by resentment

[1] B. J. Lossing, *Vassar College and Its Founder*, p. 12.

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against heavy taxation particularly in the national church tithes, for both brothers were dissenters from the English Church and of the Baptist faith.

But, although Matthew was but four years old when his parents sailed from England, he remembered distinctly certain almost miraculous escapes which marked his early years: how at the age of three or four he rode one of his father's farm horses to water at the pond near the farmhouse (his elder brother, John Guy, riding another horse), and was thrown over the horse's neck into the pond when the horse stooped to drink; how at another time " with a narrow escape of his life " he was " chased by a Furious English Bull in crossing a large common on the Estate of the Lord of the Manor, the Duke of Norfolk "; and how again he was violently beaten and mauled by a deaf and dumb idiot. The child had still another miraculous escape from death during the seventy-day voyage to America on the ship *Criterion,* for in a terrible storm " a wave breaking over the vessel swept me," says the autobiography, " from the companionway to the Larboard side of the ship, loosing my new London bought hat and just escaping a watery grave."

The family remained in New York through the winter of 1795-96, but meanwhile the brothers, James and Thomas, went on a tour of investigation up the Hudson as far as Utica. So discouraged were they by the appearance of the farm lands which they saw that they were about to go back to their native country when some English families who were going to settle at Poughkeepsie persuaded the Vassars to accompany them and try the reputed fertility of Dutchess County. As a result of this expedition, the Vassars purchased a farm lying on the shores of Wappenger's Creek (after-

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wards the village of Manchester), and here on the banks of the creek Mr. Vassar remembered tending the cows with Sister Maria, making willow whistles, fishing with pin-hooks, and catching turtles.

In the fall of 1798, Thomas Vassar returned to England to purchase cereals and some small stock for the farm, and on his return brought back with him some fine seed of the most profitable kind of barley for brewing, that the family might have their own home-brewed beer as they had in England. After this the thrifty Vassars made not only their own ale, but ale for their neighbors, and the reminiscences tell of the small boy Matthew "going with Mother to town on a pleasant Saturday with waggon and horses to market butter, eggs, and a barrel of home-brewed beer." The business begun on this small scale became so extensive that in 1801 the Vassars moved to town to engage in the business of brewing, and while their house was being built, lived in their new brewery, which was situated between what are now Mill Street and Main Street.

Mr. Vassar's personal remembrances of this time include theatrical performances which he got up with the help of his young friends; a fondness for painting which led him to buy a box of water-colors and manufacture and sell "Christmas pieces"; and a "fracas" at night school with "old Gabriel Ellison," who had floored him (literally) with the blow of a heavy round ruler. "I got up," he writes sixty years later with much satisfaction, "and sent an Ink Stand at his Yellow Breeches, besmearing his white cotton Stockings to a pepper and salt colour." Owing to "the Rumpus" raised at home over this event, Matthew's education was nearly terminated, but on his mother's intervention he

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was sent to another night school. Probably here things went no better, for he concludes the subject of his studies abruptly with the sentence: "To sum it all up between my own temper and Father's severities, and indifference to giving me an Education I got none—scarcely to read and write."

There is ample evidence that the Founder endeavored to make up for the lack of early education by the books he read and by his travels abroad. In the collection of Matthew Vassar relics at Vassar College we find among his books the works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, several books on travel, like *Observations in Europe,* by John P. Durbin, President of Dickinson College, various religious volumes, such as *The Evidence of Prophecy,* by the Reverend A. Keith, and a well-worn Bible bound in calf and with notes on the fly-leaves of texts of sermons heard. Pasted on the back cover of this volume is a printed clipping which had apparently appealed to Mr. Vassar:

"The Bible,—It is a book of laws, to show the right and wrong.

"It is a book of wisdom, that condemns all folly and makes the foolish wise.

"It is a book of truth, that detects all errors.

"It is the book of life, that shows the way from everlasting death.

"It is the most compendious book in the world.

"It is the most authentic and entertaining history that was ever published."

It is probable that Mr. Vassar's reading of the Bible was influential in forming the clear, forceful style of expression which characterizes his extant letters and all his communications to the trustees.

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In the spring of 1806 Matthew Vassar, as he says, "left home to seek his fortune." His father had resolved to apprentice him for seven years to a tanner in Poughkeepsie, but on the morning on which the articles were to be signed, the boy confided to his mother that he would never be bound to such a disgusting trade, and "started privately on his journey,—with 6/ in his pocket, two coarse East India Muslin Shirts, a pair of woolen socks, Cowskin shoes, all tied up in a Cotton Bandana Handkerchief." His mother accompanied him on foot nine miles to New Hamburg Ferry, where the two parted in tears, Matthew to cross the river. As he wandered southward on the other side, he was given a lift by an old gentleman who proved to be an Englishman named Butterworth, and who knew all about his father. The Butterworths gave the boy food and lodging at their farmhouse at Balmville that night and the next morning offered Matthew work on the farm and in their country store. This offer Matthew gratefully accepted and he proved so faithful and valuable a helper that from working merely for his living he had advanced to a salary of $300 per annum at the end of his three years' stay with them. Then because he was offered more salary he went to work for a Mr. Smith in the neighborhood, where he stayed until 1808, when his father urged him to return to Poughkeepsie "to take charge of his Books and attend to Collections of Ale and Beer Money." Mr. Vassar's memories of this time are of pleasant journeying down the Hudson in packet sloop, of the life at country hotels, of a dream of an old woman's ghost which appeared to him, of occupying himself with his father's business.

In May, 1811, when James Vassar, the father, was absent in New York, his brewery took fire and burned

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down. As he had no insurance on the brewery, Mr. Vassar was ruined by the loss, and to his business worries was added the death of his oldest son, John Guy Vassar, two days after the fire, from an accident in the ruins. These great misfortunes were followed by other misadventures in business until at last James Vassar returned to farm life, leasing fourteen acres of land a little north of the Fall Kill. Here he lived until his death in 1840.

Sobered by the misfortunes of his family and feeling its responsibilities, Matthew Vassar now began an independent brewing business, making three barrels of ale at a time and selling this in small quantities with his own hands. He had hired an old dye-house for the purpose from his brother-in-law, George Booth, and there with a few kettles and tubs carried on his modest business. In the fall of 1812, Matthew opened in the basement of the court house the first oyster saloon and restaurant in the village of Poughkeepsie and now "all day long Mr. Vassar might have been seen brewing at the dye-house, or going about the village with his ale, or disposing of his 'grains' as the barley was popularly called after it had served the purpose of brewing; while his evenings until midnight were devoted to his customers in his 'saloon.'"[1]

The autobiography continues: "In the following summer, 1812, began the world, that is the business world for myself by getting married and beginning housekeeping, renting part of a tenement at $40 per year and was severely rebuked by my Father for my extravagance, $25 a year was as much as he thought I ought to pay." The whole outfit for this extravagant housekeeping did not exceed $150 and the plain deal

[1] Lossing, p. 27.

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table in the little museum at Vassar, the dining-room table of Mr. Vassar's first married life, suggests the simplicity of his living arrangements. We know little about the Miss Catherine Valentine whom Mr. Vassar married and with whom he lived for almost fifty years. According to surviving relatives she was a careful, frugal housekeeper and an eccentric personality, and showed no interest in her husband's great project, although she lived until 1863.

Mr. Vassar does not himself recount his business struggles from this time on to the amassing of his fortune, but contents himself with a simple sentence (after the statement about his marriage): "But I will not pursue my narrative down any further as most part of my life from this time till some eighteen years ago was filled up with the ordinary business relation with its various phases, ups and downs." We know, however, that the struggle was a severe one until in 1814 Thomas Purser, a wealthy Englishman, brought capital to help his enterprise; and again, two years later when Mr. Purser's health failed, Nathan and Mulford Conklin entered into a partnership with Mr. Vassar which lasted until 1829. Then Mr. Vassar carried on the business alone until it assumed such proportions that he took into partnership his nephews, Matthew Vassar, Jr., and John Guy Vassar, sons of his dead brother, John Guy Vassar. In 1836 a larger brewery had to be built, and this was erected just above the Main Street landing. Here Mr. Vassar's fortune was made.

When wealth was assured and the struggle was over, Mr. Vassar went to Europe, in 1845, and it was while he was in London that he visited the famous Guy's Hospital "the founder of which was a family relative." The autobiography continues: "And seeing this in-

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stitution first suggested the idea of devoting a portion of my estate to some charitable purpose, and about this period took quite an interest in a niece of mine Lydia Booth who was then engaged in a small way in the tuition of children resulting in after years in the opening of a female Seminary in Poughkeepsie—The force of circumstances brought me occasionally in business intercourse with my niece, which will account for the early direction of my mind for the enlarged education of Women and the subsequent drift of enquiries in my conversation and correspondence with gentlemen educators in this country and a few in Europe, which by reference to letters on file will more fully appear."

The file of letters is lost. It was probably among "uncle's papers" which were sold by Matthew Vassar, Jr., to the ragman "to add to the estate," in the words which popular tradition puts in his mouth; and the autobiography gives no further account of Vassar's great enterprise, but ends with a record of his earlier philanthropy, his contributions to the Baptist Church in Poughkeepsie:

"Having a few years previous taken a deep interest in the secular or temporal affairs of the Baptist church as one of the Trustees and being an early advocate of erecting a new house of worship I took an active part in raising by subscription the necessary funds, procuring architectural plans, etc., but the enterprise resulted in entailment of a debt against the society which I afterward cancelled of some $25,000 to $30,000 and subsequently gave to the society by legal conveyance of the whole property by Deed of the same, since follow'd from that date to the present time with a donation of 310 to 400 a year."

It was natural that a self-made man who by his own

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industry had increased his fortune from "6/" to hundreds of thousands of dollars should recount with obvious satisfaction his munificence to his church. Something of the same naïve delight in his wealth was exhibited by Mr. Vassar in the elaborate country estate "Springside" which he had laid out for himself about a mile from his city house, with porter's lodge, barns, ice-house, dairy, granary, aviary, apiary, deer-park, conservatory, log-cabin, villa, and grounds planned by landscape gardeners. Mr. Lossing devotes eighteen pages to an account of "Springside" in *The History of Vassar College and Its Founder,* and one can imagine how the flowery pages delighted its owner. But by far the greatest source of satisfaction from his fortune was found by Mr. Vassar in the college which bears his name.

The shaping of his ultimate purpose, the influences which swayed the old gentleman in various directions, the final resolution of founding a college for women and its effect upon Mr. Vassar's character are such important elements in the story of the foundation of the college that their narrative belongs in another chapter. We must note here simply that under the persistent efforts of Milo. P. Jewett, afterwards the first president of Vassar College, Mr. Vassar made his great resolution and at sixty-three a new life began for him.

It is amazing to see how under the inspiration of this great purpose, large ideas shaped themselves in the Founder's mind and a certain breadth of tolerance characterized his formal utterances. In the small printed pamphlet, *Communications to the Board of Trustees of Vassar College by Its Founder,* the man's straightforward business sense, his keen interest in the advancement of women, and his desire to make the college "the best" possible, all appear.

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"It is my hope—it was my early hope and desire,—indeed, it has been the main incentive to all I have already done, or may hereafter do, or hope to do, to inaugurate a new era in the history and life of women."[1] This was Mr. Vassar's statement in 1864 and he develops it in interesting practical detail:

"The attempt you are to aid me in making fails wholly of its point if it be not in advance, and a decided advance. I wish to give one sex all the advantages too long monopolized by the other. Ours is, and is to be, an institution for women—not men. In all its labors, positions, rewards and hopes, the idea is the development and exposition, and the martialing to the front, and the preferment of women, of their powers, on every side, demonstrative of their equality with men. If possible, demonstrative of such capacity as, in certain fixed directions, may surpass those of men. This, I conceive, may be fully accomplished within the rational limits of true womanliness, and without the slightest hazard to the natural attractiveness of her character."[2]

This was but a preamble to the point he was about to urge, that women should "at least share the most prominent and responsible positions in our gift":

"I verily believe a generous partition between the sexes of all the professorships, is due no less to the idea underlying this enterprise than to woman herself, and the immediate and permanent success of our efforts. Inaugurate woman's elevation and power, genius and taste, at the same time you open the door to her sex; for it is vain to educate woman's powers of thought, and then limit their operation. Give her a present

[1] P. 21, February 23, 1864.
[2] *Com.*, p. 21.

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confidence, and not push her back again upon a future hope. I have already staked my means upon my belief in her present practical powers. Let the foremost women of our land be among the most advanced and honored pilots and guardians of coming women, and I cheerfully leave my name to be associated with the result."[1]

After this noble declaration of the policy of Vassar College in regard to women in its faculty, the Founder added a secondary reason for having women professors, which was suggested by his shrewd business sense:

"Nine male professors, or even six, at any time, much more at the opening of our doors, will cause a perpetual drain upon our resources, which we may wish we had avoided when too late. Now, at least, it seems to me the dictate of the only enlightened prudence to reduce that number by at least one-half and to concentrate their duties of supervision and lectures, so that all the rest may be left to the province of woman as distinctly hers."

These two motives which Mr. Vassar states in regard to giving professorships to women again reflect the two sides of the Founder's character.

A certain surprising breadth of mind towards religious matters appears in these "Communications." In Mr. Vassar's address at the first meeting of the trustees, he declared: "In forming the first Board of Trustees, I have selected representatives from the principal Christian denominations among us; and in filling the vacancies which may occur in this body, as also in the appointing the Professors, the Teachers, and other Officers of the College, I trust a like Catholic spirit will always govern the Trustees—All sectarian influences

[1] *Com.*, p. 23.

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should be carefully excluded; but the training of our students should never be intrusted to the skeptical, the irreligious, or the immoral."[1] This same point is emphasized again in Mr. Vassar's address on February 23, 1864:[2]

"Against the time when the subject of appointment shall arrive, and even now, while the distribution of duties in the various departments will receive your attention, I shall venture to refresh your memories in regard to the care to be taken in the exclusion of sectarian influences, and to that end, that the appointees, in every grade, shall fairly represent the principal Christian denominations among us. I would rather be remembered as one who earnestly sought to fuse the Christian element of the world into one grand Catholic body—at any rate, as one who has endeavored to remove all barriers, rather than recognize or cherish any exclusively.

"As the legitimate and practical result of this *idea*, I would on this point invite to the College Desk, on the days of public worship, alternately the representatives of every Christian church—Let our pupils see and know that beyond every difference there is, after all, but one God, one gospel; and that the spires of whatsoever church forever point toward one heaven." Thus he at once declared for religion as an essential element in education and for a breadth which was beyond the practice current at that time.

A like tolerance was displayed in another direction, in regard to the subject of dancing in the College. How serious a question for the time this was may be seen from the correspondence of Miss Lyman, the first Lady

[1] *Com.*, p. 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

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THE WALK TO THE NEW LAKE WHICH CARRIES OUT MR. VASSAR'S PLAN

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Principal, and President Raymond.[1] Mr. Vassar's remarks show his characteristic common sense:

"Among other physical exercises claiming consideration, dancing has been presented to our Executive Committee, and been urged by many citizens. The attention in the Christian community has been awakened by recent writings pro and con on these questions—Years ago I made up my judgment on these great questions in the religious point of view, and came to a decision favorable to amusements. I never practiced public dancing in my life, and yet in view of its being a healthful and graceful exercise, I heartily approved of it, and now recommend its being taught in the College to all pupils whose parents or guardians desire it."[2]

Mr. Vassar's interest extended to "other physical exercises" and in June, 1868, he recommends to the trustees that a bathing-pool be made on the campus. "I would also advise the construction of a dam for a pond at the junction of the streams of Casper's Kill and the waters of Millcove Brook—for the purpose of erecting bathing-houses, and the planting of willow shade-trees to screen the building from public view."[3]

In view of Mr. Vassar's vigorous assertions regarding woman's capacities, rights, and responsibilities, it may naturally be asked whether he expressed a definite opinion regarding the place of woman in the state. It is to be remembered that although this issue was raised by occasional and earnest advocates, it had not become matter of general, extended discussion then. There is one interesting letter of the Founder's extant which is perhaps suggestive of sympathy with the agitation for

[1] *Life and Letters of John Howard Raymond*, pp. 554-56.
[2] *Com.*, p. 44.
[3] *Ibid.*

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" woman's rights," though the careful reader will note that he does not really face the issue and turns the expression of his sympathy rather toward woman's " rights " in literature and art! Mr. Vassar was indignant at the phraseology of a law which embraced women and idiots in a single section, and he wrote this letter to an enthusiastic young woman after Anna Dickinson's once famous and fiery lecture on " Idiots and Women ":

Tuesday morning, April 28, 1868.

My dear Miss Powell:

I received last evening by the hands of a colored boy your note of yesterday's date, and was glad to hear that you and all the other young ladies of the College were pleased with Miss Dickinson's lecture last evening, and before I had passed the Gate-Lodge after leaving the Observatory I was sorry I had not remained to hear the Lecture,—notwithstanding my deafness, as her *address and manners* I could have observed and after all that *goes far* with our sex.

The subject of " Woman's Suffrage " or " Idiots and Women " was correctly quoted from the Laws granting the right of them to the ballot Box, and when I first read the Law some years ago I was equally surprised to find our Fair Sex placed in so shameful category as " Criminals, paupers, idiots, etc." which if the Law was right by this classification I think it is full time that my 300 Daughters at " Vassar " knew it, and applied the remedy.

The truth is it is all *nonsense,* and irreconcilable with Divine truth in regard to the mental capacity of Woman; nothing but long prejudice with the domineering spirit of man has kept woman from occupying a high elevation in literature and art, but men's tyranny and jealousy and willful usurpation of her normal rights, etc.

Excuse these hastily written remarks with many interruptions while waiting for my carriage to go to the College.

Yours very truly, etc. M. VASSAR.

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Such opinions as these of woman's mental ability, such liberal views of the much discussed question of amusements, such a catholic attitude towards the problem of sectarianism for the College, and above all the avowed purpose of helping establish woman in her true position in the world give peculiar emphasis to the trite aphorism with which Mr. Vassar closed one of his exhortations: "Progress is my watchword."[1]

That, too, is the keynote of a letter written as late as June 10, 1868, to President Raymond apparently in regard to a proposed suggestion that Vassar's prices should be reduced and the expenses retrenched in order to do this:

"My maxim or motto is now the same as at the beginning of our enterprise. Do all things, intellectual and material, the best and make your prices accordingly. The idea that during the infancy of the College to court public patronage by catering to cheap or low prices of instruction is to my mind ridiculous. I go for the best means cost what they may and corresponding prices for tuition in return. Suppose we raised the terms (altho' I would not as a whole) only on the ornamental branches, do you suppose the College would be *relieved of Pupils*. Nay, *not a whit*. I am therefore for giving the Daughters of the public the *very best means* of Education, and make *them pay for it*. I will stake my reputation on the result,—the *best* article in the market always meets with the most readiest and quickest Sale, and as a general rule pays the largest profit. I don't believe in erecting a 'monument' to my everlasting shame by a failure in judgment in its conductment."

Nothing is more typical of the Founder than this letter. The speeches to the Trustees and the letters in

[1] *Com.*, p. 48.

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the possession of the College, likewise give glimpses of the personality of Mr. Vassar as quaint as the daguerreotypes which the College owns. He felicitates the College on "a vegetable garden of several acres—planted with all varieties of small summer fruits," adding "these already smile with the promise of a generous supply of esculents for the College family in the first months of its existence."[1] Again he advocates the teaching of domestic economy. "I would, therefore, suggest the erection of a building for special training in the knowledge of the culinary art, where pupils with the consent of their parents or guardians may be instructed how to make a pudding, boil an egg, cook a potato, prepare a dinner, and in fine, arrange in a proper manner the affairs of a household."

Again he has a long discussion on the removal of the word "Female" from the title under which the College was incorporated ("Vassar Female College"). Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, Editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, had urged upon Mr. Vassar the need of removing the obnoxious word from the title of the College, and as her manuscript letters prove, he is repeating her arguments to the trustees in his Communication of June 28, 1866. The word "female" degrades woman, classing her merely with all animals that bear young; it is unscriptural and ungrammatical; is not definite, for "aged women, little girls, and married women are females; but these are not included in the class of young women for whose benefit Vassar College was established."[2] Mr. Vassar gives Mrs. Hale full credit for the change of name when it is accomplished in '67,

[1] *Com.*, p. 38.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

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both in his next speech to the trustees and in a personal letter to her:

"A singular coincidence just occurred. On the very morning of the day of receipt of your last letter the central marble slab on the front of the Edifice containing the word 'Female' was removed, relieving the Institution from the odium which has so long disgraced it. It now reads

VASSAR COLLEGE

FOUNDED A.D. 1861.

and let me advise you that to you, my dear friend, to you only, am I indebted for this change after so long a contest by a phalanx of opposers."[1]

A certain rare touch of the pompous appears in his request to the trustees for portraits of themselves:

"I have to request of this Board of Trustees that they respectively furnish the College at their own expense, a half-length portrait of themselves, which I shall regard as a compliment to me, and respond to it by a written note and have them hung up in the Gallery of Fine Arts in the College, that future generations may know who were the dignified friends I called to my assistance when I commenced this great educational work for Woman."

This same attitude of mind, a certain naïve satisfaction in his work as Founder and in his relation to Vassar College, appears in a carefully written letter to President Raymond, November 29, 1866, expressing Mr. Vassar's regret at being unable to attend the Thanksgiving service at the College. The excuses are made in a rather elaborate and pious strain, ending

[1] *Com.*, p. 43.

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with the long meter doxology and at the bottom of the sheet a note explains the formalities:

"N.B. You are at liberty to read this note to the Young Ladies & if you choose. M. V."

How close and happy Mr. Vassar's connection with the College was in these later days is seen in the biography of President Raymond. Scarcely a day passed without his visiting the College. No detail was too small for his notice and interest. He was revered and honored by the students, loved and consulted by the president. Dr. Raymond's own words show the happy and harmonious relation which existed between himself and the Founder:

"For the first time I have been brought into direct contact with Mr. Vassar's heart; it is as large as an elephant's and as tender as a babe's. We talked over the whole enterprise, and all that he aimed at and how he aimed to accomplish it. Our views harmonized at every point. It is a wonder to me how a man without any regular education can so correctly appreciate the necessities of such an institution and the conditions of its success. But it is the purity of his motives and the large and generous catholicity of his spirit, in combination with a broad common-sense and much business experience, that explains it."[1]

The climax of Mr. Vassar's happy satisfaction in his work came on the first Founder's Day in 1866. *The Vassariana*, Vol. I, No. 1, published in Poughkeepsie, June, 1866, gives the details of this inaugural Founder's Day. The Faculty in March had adopted the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the twenty-ninth of April, the anniversary of the birthday of Matthew Vassar, Founder of

[1] *Life*, p. 513, Letter to his wife, June 7, 1864.

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this College, be, and hereby is, entered on its calendar as a holiday to be annually observed by appropriate commemorative exercises, and that this anniversary be designated ' The Founder's Day.' "

The students' own account of the reception of the Founder on this occasion must be given:

" A handsome arch, composed of graceful festoons and garlands of evergreens, spanned the broad avenue. Upon it were the words ' Welcome to the Founder.' At the left was the date ' April 29, 1792.' On the right, ' April 29, 1866.' In the center was a graceful monogram. Over the whole gayly floated bright flags and banners. The entrance to the College was also decorated with flags and evergreens.

" By five P.M., the guests had all arrived and were received in the public parlors by the lady teachers. At six the students under the direction of a Marshal and two aids marched on either side of the Avenue to the Porter's Lodge. Here the column halted, leaving the line continuous from the Lodge to the circle directly before the entrance. The Founder then drove in, accompanied by the President of the College, and was greeted by pleasant smiles and waving handkerchiefs. The line turned immediately and marched by the side of the carriage to the College. Here the Faculty and Teachers awaited the procession. When all were placed, the select choir upon the portico burst forth into a glad song of welcome to the Founder. The aged Founder with tearful glistening eye stood overcome with grateful surprise."

A literary program in the chapel followed. This included an essay on " The World's Advance," recitations representing woman's social position in different ages; a Floral Tribute in which Flora (a student) presented a crown of flowers; and finally an original song in honor of Matthew Vassar, beginning " Our Father

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and our Friend." The evidently sincere affection proffered by these young women to the Founder of the College and all the ceremony attending its expression must indeed have symbolized to Mr. Vassar not only the success, but the happiness which had resulted from the carrying out of his great plan.

It was granted to Mr. Vassar to live to see his plan fulfilled and to reap the fruits of his great gift. It was granted to him also to die in the midst of the surroundings which had so amplified his personality and his usefulness. President Raymond has given us an account of the last meeting of the Board of Trustees which Mr. Vassar attended:[1]

"At 11 A.M. the Board convened and, immediately after the organization of the meeting, Mr. Vassar proceeded to read his customary address. As his tone was somewhat feeble and he read sitting, the members of the Board gathered closer around him and listened in profound silence. Suddenly, when he had almost finished, his voice faltered and ceased, the paper dropped from his hand upon the table by which he sat, his head fell back upon the chair—and so he was gone! Without a struggle or sign of pain, his spirit had passed away; and after the lapse of a few moments, during which the machinery of life seemed gently running down, his body rested in its last repose.

"When, an hour later, the trustees reassembled to listen to the closing paragraph of the address, it was found to have an almost prophetic interest:

"'And now, gentlemen, on closing these remarks, I would humbly and solemnly implore the Divine Goodness to continue His smiles and favor on your institution, and to bestow on all hearts connected therewith His love and blessing, having peculiarly protected us by His providence throughout all our college trials for three consecutive years, without a single death in our

[1] *Life*, pp. 650-51.

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Board, or serious illness or death of one of the pupils within the college walls. Wishing you, gentlemen, a continuance of health and happiness, I bid you a cordial and final farewell. Thanking you kindly for your official attentions and services, and not expecting, from my advanced years, and increasing infirmities, to meet with you officially again, I implore the Divine Goodness to guide and direct you aright in all your councils.' "

The narrative of the life of the Founder of Vassar College is a simple one. The most significant and memorable feature of it is the transforming power of the great idea. An uneducated, narrow man, who had made his fortune in a homely business which in boyhood he had tried to escape, after the age of sixty was controlled by a great thought which absorbed his interest, widened his horizon, developed his sympathies. Matthew Vassar by halving his fortune more than doubled his satisfactions. And as surely as Matthew Vassar founded the college which bears his name, so surely did that college found Matthew Vassar's greatest usefulness and happiness.

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III

THE FOUNDATION

The Origin of the Idea. Milo P. Jewett's Work. His Election as First President. His Educational Tour of Europe. His Proposed Plan of Study. The Opposition to the President. The Fatal Letter. The President's Resignation. President Jewett's Work. The Comments of the Press on the College. The Election of John Howard Raymond as President, and His Plans. The Prospectus of 1865. The First Faculty. The Opening Day and First Students.

WHAT were the influences that developed a great and novel idea in the mind of a man of such training and life as Mr. Vassar's and fixed his name among the founders of Merton, Harvard, Yale?

It may be answered definitely that little, or nothing, was due to the scattered efforts sketched in the first chapter. Apparently Matthew Vassar had heard nothing of them. Indeed the press notices of his own project reveal a general unconsciousness of the fact that there were advocates of woman's college education before Vassar, and the letters of the men nearest the educational problem indicate that the movements we have recounted had made little general impression. Even Dr. Jewett, himself engaged in the education of girls, and in touch with colleges as well as schools, calls Vassar "the first female college in the world."

Was the idea due to a suggestion of his niece, Lydia Booth? She had a small school in Poughkeepsie, and her uncle owned the building. He had many talks

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with her, he tells us, and her suggestion of an institution of " a higher order than any then existing " " made a deep impression on his mind." He came to think that this was the chief source of the idea and so tells his trustees,[1] and it is to be noted that at this time he makes no reference whatever to Dr. Jewett, whose influence was then near its end. In an autobiographic fragment written in 1866 he states that to his occasional business with his niece about 1845 was due " the early direction of my mind for the enlarged education of women and the subsequent drift of inquiries in my conversation and correspondence with gentlemen educators in this country and a few in Europe."

Against this pleasant memory of a time long passed, several considerations must be weighed. No word of Miss Booth's is quoted suggesting a college, unless in this statement of Mr. Vassar, and those most familiar with the origins of the plan thought her influence " infinitesimal." Mr. Vassar omits all reference to Dr. Jewett here, but we know that Jewett wrote the letters to the educators mentioned and received their answers. The contemporary documents show that Mr. Vassar was questioning Dr. Jewett regarding a suggestion of a college that then seemed novel to him. But that some scheme for improved female education may have been among the many projects floating through his mind and that this was originally due to Lydia Booth is probable. One form of this was a provision for " indigent females," with a view of instruction in the elements of housework. Of more conclusive weight, however, is the fact that in 1855, after Miss Booth's death, Mr. Vassar's plan was to build a hospital, and his surprise was great

[1] Address February 23, 1864, *Com.*, pp. 15 *et seq.*

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when Dr. Jewett attacked the plan and urged a woman's college.

Milo P. Jewett went to Poughkeepsie in 1855, after years of successful conduct of a large and prosperous school for girls in Alabama. He was a New Englander, a graduate of Dartmouth and Andover, had been a professor in Marietta, and had been actively associated with the school systems of both Massachusetts and Ohio. He purchased Lydia Booth's school and came into close association with Mr. Vassar, through business and through church relations. Mr. Vassar was fond of discussing his plans for the disposition of his fortune and opened to Jewett the proposal for a hospital. Jewett told him that great hospitals were not for small inland cities and that he might as well throw his money into the river. Jewett followed up the discussion till Vassar was dissatisfied with his plan and besought advice as to what he might do. Then Jewett opened his own plan, "a college for young women which shall be to them what Yale and Harvard are to young men." There were "plenty of female colleges, so-called," he told him, but not one endowed in all the world. Such a college would be a "monument more lasting than the pyramids." This was in the winter of 1855-56.

Dr. Jewett followed up his suggestions with elaborate papers on the constitution of such a college, on its equipment and standards, its location and the provision for its domestic and social life. He very wisely met and answered the practical queries and objections put to him by the shrewd, keen manufacturer, and subtly dwelt on all that could most move him, his ambition, his desire to serve his fellows, his local pride, his patriotism, his Christian faith, the gratitude of generations to come. Then he drew out letters from men

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of influence and showed them to Mr. Vassar in support of his own project. " To you Providence offers the high privilege, the peculiar honor, of actually establishing and putting into operation the first grand permanent endowed Female College in the United States." When opposition came, as it did, from the nephews, with whom Mr. Vassar had planned to found the hospital, from his family and friends,[1] from those who almost side-tracked the scheme in a modified plan for several small institutions, schools, and a library for Poughkeepsie, Dr. Jewett braced the Founder by exhortations and appeals, and held him to the large project he had suggested.

Then he urged immediate action, which savored of courage just then, when the country was in the throes of uncertainty which preceded the Civil War, but Mr. Vassar's wish to be his own executor supported him. Questions of the " locality " were discussed, and on that Jewett submitted one of his elaborate papers, and the number and character of the trustees, and the drafting of a charter. Jewett declares in a letter of September, 1860, that he was giving all his time to the College, " writing one hundred letters," visiting Albany and New York, and but for his " presence and vigilance " the project would be defeated. But Mr. Vassar had now placed the undertaking " beyond all contingency."

Accordingly, a charter was now submitted to the Legislature and granted by that body January 18, 1861, a time when the popular mind, as well as the Legislature, was so engrossed by " the State of the Union " as to render this epoch-making act practically unnoticed. The building was staked out, the Founder says, on the day of Sumter's fall, and on June 4, 1861,

[1] *Before Vassar Opened*, p. 118.

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he dug up the first spadeful of earth which began the excavation.

At the first meeting of the board, February 26, 1861, Mr. Vassar presented to his trustees securities amounting to $400,000, and addressed them regarding his ideals in a singularly simple and effective manner.[1] Dr. Jewett was nominated for president by President Martin B. Anderson, at the Founder's request, and was chosen by a practically unanimous vote.

It is not often that one sees a modern college in the making, the material foundations, the business organization, the formation of the course of study, the choice of a faculty, and all without the introduction of a student on the scene. This is portrayed in the first four years of Vassar's history. The great building, then deemed essential in a woman's college, was begun and built during the trying years of the Civil War. Mr. Vassar was the head of the Executive Committee and brought his large business experience to its service. Meetings were held every week and often semi-weekly, and the resident trustees were in constant consultation as the disturbances of those times forced modifications and adjustment of contracts, or raised ever fresh questions regarding the buildings and their adaptation to the use of a woman's college. It was a time of rare trial, but the Founder bore his great responsibility until the building was complete and the College ready to open its doors.

The president's work was less calculated to draw the attention of the onlooker. To him the opportunity seemed novel and to demand a new plan of education. Though aware that Europe had little to tell him concerning his problem, he fancied that in the study of its

[1] Appendix II.

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methods of training girls and in a general survey of its institutions, museums, and other equipment,—he would gain much that would work into the structure of the new college life. The Founder favored the plan, and Jewett says originated it, thinking it would contribute some renown to the new institution. Dr. Jewett was absent eight months, and afterward presented a report of his investigations to the trustees. It showed careful observation of educational systems and ideals, much practical study of methods in libraries and museums, consideration of school buildings and of apparatus, and a conviction that the great gains of his study would be seen later in the transference of his impressions to the minds and hearts of the students of the College.

He at once set himself to the preparation of a scheme of study. The members of his committee were exceptional men, Martin B. Anderson and Ezekiel G. Robinson of Rochester, men of large mould and distinguished among American educators, Nathan Bishop, with great experience in all school theory and practice, John Howard Raymond, professor in colleges and now head of the Brooklyn Polytechnic, and Rufus Babcock, an accomplished clergyman, resident in Poughkeepsie.

Jewett says the work was chiefly left to him, as these "distinguished gentlemen" were so absorbed in their own work as to be able to assist him only "by their invaluable suggestions and counsels." They were certainly a broad body of men when they allowed Dr. Jewett's scheme to go to the board as from the committee, for it fell in neither with their own training and practice nor with their general theories of a curriculum for an American college.

The plan must have been familiar to Jewett from his Southern experience, where it was in operation in some

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schools as well as colleges, though he seems to attribute it to Europe and calls it a university system. It embraced a series of schools, of languages, history, mathematics, for example, with elections among them, and the completion of a definite number of these would entitle the student to a diploma and the Master's degree. It introduced thus a broad elective group system (this, be it remembered, was in 1863), proposed study by subjects and classification of knowledge, teaching without text-books and written examinations, and it challenged the four years' course for its lack of incentives and its poor standards. The entrance standards contemplated were low, admitting young girls to the "junior class of any school," but the degree called for a course of advanced and thorough study.

Certainly nothing like this had ever been proposed for a woman's college and it justified Jewett's claim for primacy. It was the originality, however, which did not work in the place or time for which it was planned, though Jewett claims that it influenced the actual curriculum which was established after his resignation.

Dr. Jewett's views went far beyond a "course of study." From the beginning he insisted on a large and good library, on the best apparatus, on a practical museum of science, on an art gallery, and on large endowments. The non-academic needs were as fully in his view,—provision for a refined domestic life, for nurses, matron, janitor, kitchens. Nothing escaped his attention that bore on the truest success of the plan he had suggested.

Three matters of absolute importance were now urged by Jewett,—the opening of the College in 1864, the adoption of his curriculum, the appointment of professors, and for all of these he was prepared to stand

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when the board met in February. Much opposition had developed. The Founder himself, still under Jewett's influence, was doubtful about the opening and inclined to plead for more time to have all in complete readiness. A small number of the trustees were in active opposition to Jewett, and from one man unconnected with the work, but claiming to understand its demands as no other did, came letters directly attacking Jewett and striving to destroy the Founder's confidence in his wisdom and his honor.[1] Jewett was tried by all this, even beyond his strength, and came up to the decisive meeting full of anxiety and nervously exhausted, harassed, and almost prostrated, he says afterward, by the excitement of weeks, by personal and official insults, and by the blow, aimed as he thought at the College, and which might prove fatal. He says he was vilely misrepresented to Mr. Vassar, and his enemies were resolved on his removal.

All might yet have gone well had he maintained his accustomed urbanity and calm. The board debated his schemes fairly, and the Founder, anxious for the success of the plan to which he had given himself so fully, invoked "deliberation and not haste." Jewett was certainly wrong in thinking that so much depended on immediate opening and in thus meeting the expectations of the public. But his influence was strong, and even with its doubts the board voted to ask the Executive Committee to exert itself to complete the College by September, but meanwhile referred the educational schemes of Jewett back to the committee to report at the June meeting. Jewett recognized this as a defeat, and defeat became disaster through a foolish act

[1] See *Before Vassar Opened*, pp. 141 *et seq.*, on the singularly unknown influence of Charles Raymond.

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of his. He calls it "one of those unaccountable incidents which Providence sometimes employs to shape our lives and control our destinies."[1]

Jewett had written a letter to a trustee who had asked what would come before the board, and had sent five copies of it, besides, to close friends among the trustees. It recited the issues and the oppositions, referred to the Founder as inclined to side with Jewett's "enemies," and then freely wrote of him as vacillating and growing daily more childish and more fickle. The letter was heated, and such as he "ought not to have written to any man," as he afterward confesses. After the meeting this letter was accidentally dropped in the secretary's office by the man to whom it was originally written, was read by the finder, and communicated to the Founder, who naturally was grieved and cruelly hurt. He declined to have any further dealings with Jewett and asked his resignation. After full consideration Jewett resigned, in April, in a letter courteous, without bitterness, and in a spirit which had always put his work above himself. Not less admirable in the circumstances was the attitude of Mr. Vassar, hurt as he was by a personal affront, but insisting that the trustees must act for the College and not for his personal interests.[2] The two principals came out of the unhappy event with honor and with marked unselfishness. Many years later (1873) Dr. Jewett wrote to President Raymond that it was best for himself and the College that he left in 1864, that though happy in his part in rearing the scaffold he could never have coped with the difficulties the latter had vanquished in rearing

[1] The sources of our knowledge of Dr. Jewett are fully given in *Before Vassar Opened.*

[2] See the Founder's letter, *Before Vassar Opened,* p. 177.

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the structure. The Founder, indeed, has no later words of commendation for his former counselor, but how much he owed to him is clear not only from the facts recited, but from his earlier expressions of attachment and dependence and unlimited confidence.[1]

What were the results thus far achieved when this foolish act of a good, far-seeing, and able man cut him off from the work he had instigated and cherished?

The College building was almost finished, an able Board of Trustees had been gathered, a telescope, second in size in the country, had been set up in a well-constructed observatory, much apparatus had been bought, a museum of natural history, unusual for the time, had been equipped, a collection of paintings had been purchased, creditable and in the America of that generation, notable, a library had been started, with large plans for its future, a novel and striking course of study had been wrought out, and the president had ready nominations for several chairs. A college was about ready to open, the first of its kind in the world, if regarded from the point of view of its facilities, its equipment, its endowment, and its plans, with large intellectual outlook, and with an unsectarian spirit (then uncommon enough) urged by its Founder, who yet believed, as has been already quoted, that the education of the young should never be intrusted to the irreligious, the skeptical, or the immoral.

The man who was chiefly responsible, under the Founder, for all this, was Milo P. Jewett, trained educator, experienced administrator and teacher,—enthusiastic, sanguine, a refined, catholic, and cultivated Christian gentleman, and his name, little known, should be ranked with the pioneers and seers, and should find

[1] *Before Vassar Opened*, pp. 118, 193, and 196.

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some fitting monument in the College he suggested and served.[1]

A word should be added regarding the popular view of the scheme. Much newspaper comment was called out, even in those war years,—most of it favorable and congratulatory, much of it trivial, some of it distinctly critical and adverse. From occasional magazines or reviews the project received serious comment, descriptive and critical, from *Godey's Lady's Book* in frequent reference, from the *Massachusetts Teacher,* from the *New Englander* in an article by Moses Coit Tyler, then a young clergyman in Poughkeepsie. From "Vassar's Folly" to the promise of a "New Era for Women," the notes are run along the scale, and afford a very interesting indication of the varieties of opinion with which the new College was to argue, contend, and cooperate.[2]

More than a year was to elapse before the actual opening of the College, and the educational plans of Jewett were sure to fall away without his powerful support. It was a critical hour for the new College and everything depended on the choice of an able and experienced man. Should the College open in the fall? Should it attempt Jewett's novel plan of study? Who should be its teachers and shape aright its first actual beginnings?

Dr. Jewett had nominated to his friends a trustee, who was also the successful head of an educational institution for boys, and who had had long experience as a teacher in colleges. John Howard Raymond had been a member of the first Board of Trustees of the

[1] Fuller details about Dr. Jewett are given in *Before Vassar Opened,* especially pp. 195 *et seq.*

[2] *Ibid.,* pp. 202 *et seq.*

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College and was a man admirably equipped by educational experience for this new and epoch-making work. Educated at Columbia College (which he left in his sophomore year at the age of fifteen), and graduated at Union College and Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute, he held first a professorship at the Hamilton Theological Institute, where he taught, he said, "in every various department—Hebrew, Latin, rhetoric, elocution, and the scriptures."[1] In 1850, when the University of Rochester was started, he was prominent, with a large number of Hamilton professors, in the work of organization, and he served as professor there until 1855, when he was called to the presidency of the new Collegiate and Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn. Here he showed his "unsurpassed talent for organization" as he gradually shaped into a great coherent whole the raw material with which he had to deal: "an immense school springing into life full-grown in which scholars, teachers, and trustees were all brand-new and mostly unacquainted with one another."[2]

The power acquired through these varied educational experiences made itself felt in the meetings of the Board of Trustees of Vassar College during the critical period of the discussion of plans for the College while the buildings were in the making and the policies had not a foundation laid. Dr. Raymond, in a letter dated July 10, 1864, speaks modestly of his work as a trustee: "Circumstances occurred . . . which enabled me to reconcile some divisions and to suggest solutions of some embarrassing problems; and this, as it afterward appeared, greatly to my surprise, resulted in a proposition to offer me the place of President."

[1] *Life and Letters of John Howard Raymond*, p. 86.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 314.

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The difficulties of the new undertaking are set forth by Dr. Raymond in a letter written to the Founder before he had decided to accept the presidency. "There seem to be imperative reasons for opening the College next fall; and a great deal remains to be done to complete the preparation. I do not refer to the material arrangements, which are in good hands and more than sufficient for a beginning, but to the interior and still more vital organization of the faculty and system of instruction and discipline,—the selection of professors and teachers, the course of studies, the distribution of the labor, and in general, the entire scheme of regimen, domestic and educatory, for an institution of the first class and in many respects a novelty in the history of education."[1]

Dr. Raymond was not easily prevailed on to take up the great work, and not till June 10 did he accept the trust, to the immense relief of Mr. Vassar and to the gratification of the board. It was determined at the June meeting of the trustees to postpone the opening till September, 1865, and to issue at once a prospectus to the public, setting forth the proposed scope of the College and its scheme of education. A crisis was passed, as is noted in the statement of Dr. Raymond, and the meeting broke up amid general interchange of handshakes and congratulations. And time was needed. The building was not ready,—a new plan of education was to be formulated, a faculty chosen, and an organization perfected.

Dr. Raymond had practically carte blanche for his schemes. Like Jewett he believed that the call was for a *liberal* education, and a thorough one, but he was confident that a college for girls would meet enough

[1] *Life*, p. 507.

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opposition without assuming the burden of a type of curriculum unfamiliar to the country at large and naturally open to attack. To have introduced it then, with a faculty untried in its exercise, would have been a palpable error, even if the scheme had proved itself entirely satisfactory in the Southern schools. What Dr. Raymond found true of the preparation of girls for college work abundantly justified his decision to adhere to the method current in the North and to impose a strictly regulated, and in the main compulsory, curriculum.

So the new president set up his lonely quarters in a local hotel and proceeded to prepare his organization and to look up a faculty. The problem was not a simple one. The Founder demanded only that women should have every advantage open to men and left to the president the determination of the method. But the standards for men were unsettled, the very nature of a college in dispute, and the old education challenged at every point. And would the same principles, if agreed on, serve for the education of girls?

The statement has been frequently made and printed that the founders of this woman's college had no thought of anything but a duplication of the current education of young men. Nothing could be further from the facts. They sought eagerly for the distinguishing features of education for girls, discussed modifications that seemed possible, printed suggestions for it that they never carried out, and adopted the scheme they did because they found no better one for the liberal education they wished to give, and because then, as now, the advocates of a specifically woman's education wished to turn the liberal college into a definite and vocational direction. The men's colleges, if tried by the same logic, would soon

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cease to give the liberal training that has been their chief service to the country.

Dr. Raymond's study and reflections brought out clearly these three "starting-points": 1, the system of life must be domestic: the ideal was the family relation, and the college must assume responsibility for social life, sanitation, moral welfare, as well as intellectual training; 2, the course of study must be really collegiate; 3, it must not be a servile copy of present systems. If anything especially adapted to women's needs could be found, its use must be assumed. The claims of "practical" studies were urged,—but what are they? Æsthetic culture, so generally neglected, must form part of a curriculum for girls. What else was clear? A popular issue was then the struggle between prescribed courses and free election. Could the latter be ventured on in the chaotic conditions that were embraced in all the training of girls?

The president's conclusion was that a tentative program must be presented and that experience only could determine what was possible. No one could tell just what preparation for college work the most aspiring could bring and what might be for a time essential, till standards could be lifted and students fitted for actual college work.

A practical difficulty, too, was "the necessity of taking into account the opinion of the public at large," for the building had to be filled at once with paying students and kept full in order to be kept open, therefore "whatever theories might require, it was idle to adopt any scheme which would not attract a liberal patronage from the well-to-do classes of the community."

The requisites for admission were accordingly made

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low, with the hope that among those who could enter on them would be some whose attainments would justify a higher than freshman rank. They must be compared, however, with the requirements of 1865, the disturbed period at the close of our great war, and not with those of to-day. They were too high, nevertheless, for the mass of the girls' schools, and the College was compelled to establish a preparatory department.

The *Prospectus,* issued in the spring of 1865, reveals what, in the judgment of Dr. Raymond, the public was anxious to learn. The College does not seek "a feeble imitation of the ordinary college curriculum." It emphasizes physical education, then sadly neglected among women, and promises regulation of recreation as well as study and ample facilities for exercise and sport. It will establish a four years' college course, respecting constitutional differences of men and women, but meeting the "essentially similar" intellects of girls with the general curriculum of the men's colleges. It will not rival seminaries in offering too much. There will be much required work and elections also will be supervised by the faculty. There is a sketch of the branches of study to be offered.

Strong emphasis is put on moral and religious education, domestic education is emphasized, and social education is insisted on with a special view to womanly influence and what were then regarded as womanly restraints. Even professional education was suggested in "the peculiarly feminine employment" of telegraphy, for example, and in phonography, and bookkeeping,—but it is fair to add that there is no trace in the earliest catalogues of any effort to follow out a plan that savors more of the Founder's practical spirit than of the president's methods or ideals.

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The names of the first faculty appear in the catalogue of '65-'66, but we find little trace of President Raymond's correspondence with them or of his thoughts in securing them, except in the case of Miss Hannah Lyman, the first Lady Principal. His correspondence with Miss Lyman shows how important he considered this office and how able was the woman whom he secured to fill it. The functions of the office were defined in President Raymond's letter of January 20, 1865,— "Lady Principal, the chief executive officer among the ladies of the corps, and the immediate associate and aid of the president in the internal administration of the College. As the personal and confidential adviser of the young ladies, she would have a more decisive influence than any other officer in the moulding of their personal habits and especially in their moral and religious training, and would probably more than any other determine the characteristic and ruling spirit of the College."[1]

The correspondence that followed shows much of President Raymond's desires in regard to his whole faculty. "I have no cast-iron systems to which I am endeavoring to shape my teachers," he writes, "but, keeping in view, as far as I can, the great essentials to be arrived at, and seeking to find a corps of officers among whom the requisite qualifications for all may be found, I can afford to leave the *distribution* of the work to be measurably determined by their several adaptations." Again he writes of "the Founder's well-known and strongly anti-sectarian views in the management of the College," and adds, "in canvassing the claims of competing candidates for situations in the College, I have never asked, to what churches do they

[1] *Life*, p. 533.

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respectively belong? always, which is the living Christian? which will bring the largest accession of spiritual power?" [1]

More specific details about the office of lady principal are given to Miss Lyman and abundant reassurance that she will be able to exert a great influence on the young women in so large an institution, even in spite of her fears. Miss Lyman's own letters give a clear impression of the intensely conscientious worker, the consecrated Christian woman, and the gracious lady that she was. Her familiar portrait hanging in the College—the lady of the snow-white curls, the flowing silk gown, the delicate lace of shawl and head-dress,—brings back her dignified and beautiful presence.

Another definite reference to his work of engaging members of the faculty occurs in Dr. Raymond's correspondence. On December 15, 1864, he writes of Professor Tenney (Department of Natural History): "I cannot tell you how much I like him. He is a younger looking man than I expected; is clear-headed, sensible and modest, earnest in his work and has had the discipline of several years of labor under the best advantages. Set him down as sure for an appointment; and Miss Mitchell, if we can afford such a costly luxury." [2]

The "costly luxury" was secured and Maria Mitchell came to Vassar at the opening as professor of astronomy to bring it the distinction of her name, the stimulus of her intellect, and the vigor of her personality. The observatory still holds the traditions of her life there: her famous dome parties to her student friends, her outspoken discussions of life and education, her intense interest in the peculiar problems of woman's training

[1] *Life*, pp. 545-46.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 528.

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and status, her unwearying mental activity. It was a great boon that a college for women should have had a woman of such mental and personal caliber to assist at its founding. The keynotes of her character were sincerity and an eager passion for truth, and she helped impart these qualities to the life of Vassar in its pioneer days.

The third woman who was a conspicuous figure in the first years of the College was Dr. Alida C. Avery,—the resident physician of the College. Miss Wood speaks of her as sharing with Dr. Raymond and Miss Lyman "the responsibility of that important formative period."[1] How deeply Dr. Raymond appreciated her help appears in his letters to her written after she left the College, and letters to different parents also show his high opinion of Dr. Avery's professional ability and his absolute confidence in her work.

The fourth in the pioneer group of women whose influence was marked and lasting in the College was Miss Frances Wood. Though she came to the College in its second year in the music department, and though she served ten years in the department of English, she found her true place in the Library and there for many years her gracious and serene spirit made its presence felt. Long the sole custodian of its books, she not only served the College ably in its day of small things, but with its growth grew in her conception of the duties and influence of her place; and she had the not too common grace of recognition of an assistant whose training could supplement and perfect her own. When after forty years of active service she retired, her house, "Homewood," continued to be a shrine of happy memories and beautiful rest till her death in July, 1914.

[1] *Earliest Years at Vassar*, Frances Wood, p. 70.

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Of the men in the first faculty, Henry Van Ingen, the professor of art, had the longest connection with the College. He came when Vassar opened in 1865 and remained until his sudden death in 1898. He was a Dutch artist, in appearance a type for Rembrandt himself on whose masterpieces he discoursed so eloquently. As artist and critic, he combined in his lectures rare traits of the creative and critical faculties, and his picturesque verbal style and dramatic gestures made his lectures lively as well as instructive. His sincerity was as bare as truth itself and as beautiful. And no truer tribute could be given to him than the quotation which Miss Wood selected for her book:[1]

"He scarce had need to doff his pride or slough the dross of earth;
E'en as he trod that day to God, so walked he from his birth,
In simpleness and gentleness and honor and clean mirth."

Professor Charles S. Farrar is the only other of the men professors whose names appear in the first catalogue who stayed more than two years at the College. He remained for ten years, and was professor of mathematics, natural philosophy, and chemistry. His work was valued very highly by his pupils, who considered him a most stimulating teacher. His Sunday Bible class, Miss Wood writes, "was very popular and the teachers thronged to hear him. He was fresh from Elmira and Thomas K. Beecher, of whom in boldness and originality he was a worthy disciple."[2]

In the next two years, two other men were added to the faculty who played a strong part in its formative period, Truman J. Backus and Frederick L. Ritter. Truman J. Backus came as professor of English in 1866

[1] P. 80.
[2] P. 42.

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and remained until 1883, when he became the distinguished and highly successful president of Packer Institute in Brooklyn. Miss Wood's reminiscences of him suggest his vivid, whimsical personality, his original methods of teaching, his vitalizing handling of every subject on which he lectured. "He was only twenty-six years old when appointed to his post, had little or no experience, claiming only great enthusiasm and love for the work of his choice. . . . Unhampered by ruts of traditional methods of education, he dared to try experiments hazardous often in the estimation of his older, more conservative colleagues, and much of the progressive, far-seeing policy that insured the success of that early period is due in large measure to him. . . . He felt the restraint of constant association with others so much older than himself, and a certain whimsical humor would sometimes break out, defying all convention, putting him often in a place to be severely criticised, and which he rarely troubled himself to explain away. . . . He had a genius for discovering latent and unsuspected talent and the best work that one could do, and never grudged generous recognition when another overtopped him.—There were no dry bones in any subject he handled. He made it fresh, living, vital."[1] He was a great teacher and his pupils have done him honor in many a place of responsibility as well as in the maintenance of the interests he kindled.

Professor Frederick L. Ritter was head of the music department from 1867 to 1891. No truer account of his work could be found than that given by President Raymond:

"Our first Professor of Music (Wiebe who remained only two years) was principally successful in giving

[1] Pp. 73-75.

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an exterior organization and discipline to that department. His successor (Ritter), without being deficient in this respect, has infused into it a new soul. His standard is the highest, and he has the faculty of rousing the ambition and stimulating the energies of all who work under him, both teachers and pupils, in a remarkable degree. The elevation of the aims of the Music Department, and the superiority of the results actually produced under his administration, are noticed by all. In addition to his qualities as an instructor and director of the art, he has a range of learning as to its literature and its history, and a zeal for turning this learning to account, which make him a peculiarly desirable officer for such an institution as our own."[1]

One of the notable selections for the early faculty was William I. Knapp, who was professor of ancient and modern languages from 1865 to 1867. Though, owing to temperamental difficulties, he did not remain long at Vassar, the quality of his intellectual power in a chair of languages is shown in subsequent appointments to chairs in Yale University and Chicago and in his life of Borrow which contributed largely to the revival of interest in the author of *Lavengro*.

Two other scholars who made a deep impression on the intellectual life of the early days were James Orton, professor of natural history from 1868 to 1877, and Charles J. Hinkel, professor of Greek and Latin from 1869 to 1890; but they were not among the first faculty, and we are concerned here with those who with Dr. Raymond did the pioneer work in the opening of the College and who stayed long enough to share in the struggle.

When the opening day of the College finally arrived, September 20, 1865, the great building was ready, the

[1] *Life*, pp. 589-90.

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" park " laid out and planted, the drives and walks mapped out, the farm and vegetable garden cultivated, a curriculum of study prepared, and the faculty, in part, appointed.

A time anticipated as this day was could not recur in the history of our civilization. For years, since Mr. Vassar's plan was announced and was hailed as the opening of a new day for women, parents and their children had looked for this hour. Mature young women came as to the realization of a cherished dream, an occasional adult with the longing to gain what had been denied her, and a great crowd of youth eager, with ill-defined hopes and anticipations, but sure that here was a new opportunity for their sex and that in some way they were sharing in the opening of an era. At once the buildings lived, and the great lumbering pile of brick and mortar, which hung on his spirit " like a mountainous millstone," wrote the president, was transmuted " into a palace of light and life." [1]

What was the revelation of those days as to the education of girls, and as to their readiness to reap the advantages offered them? Did Vassar set a standard for woman's education then, or did it simply accommodate itself to what it found?

Part of its work was to create a constituency and that it rapidly did, though in part by a compulsory bending to the conditions it found almost universal. The candidates ranged from fifteen to twenty-four years of age, with now and then a still older student, and they came from every portion of the country. They reached in attainments from a standard fit for a college junior down to a depth the president could not plumb. Their education had been uneven, chaotic, superficial, and

[1] *Life*, pp. 559 *et seq.*; *Before Vassar Opened*, pp. 272 *et seq.*

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even empty of content. There was a wide demand for "special courses," the curse then of almost all "female education," and an unwillingness to bend to the slow training of an articulated college course. But a firm, wise, and patient hand was on the helm, and through extraordinary labors and adjustments order was slowly brought out of the confusion, and the outlines of a college began to appear. Zeal and diligence characterized the students even if they lacked an understanding of the conditions of mental strength and progress. "Regulation authoritative and peremptory" was Dr. Raymond's later word for the need of the hour. "A system was, of all things, the most urgently demanded. That it should be a perfect system was less important than that it should be definite and fixed, based upon intelligent and well-considered principles and adhered to irrespective of the taste and fancies and crude speculations of the students or their friends,"—in other words that women should be taught the meaning of hard, regular work throughout a four years' college course, and that by establishing such a standard of work within the College, the standards of preparation for it should inevitably be strengthened and amplified. "It was not," said Dr. Raymond, "until the close of its third year that the Institution fully attained a collegiate character,—at the opening of the fourth collegiate year (1868-69) a permanent course of study definitely replaced the provisional one adopted at the outset."[1] At the end of the first year an attempted classification showed one senior, five juniors (four conditioned), between juniors and sophomores thirteen, sophomores twenty-nine (nineteen conditioned), between sopho-

[1] *Vassar College, Its Foundation, Aims, Resources, and Course of Study*, 1873, p. 31.

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mores and freshmen twenty-two, freshmen sixty-six (twenty-four conditioned), preparatory twenty-two.

Evidently the standards set were high enough for the times,—and manifestly Mr. Vassar's plan revealed a demand, felt and unfelt, for improved advantages for women, and for the lifting of the sex out of educational folly, sham, and neglect.

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IV

THE PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT, 1865-78

The Established Curriculum of 1873. The Standard of Entrance Requirements. The Menace of the Preparatory Department and of Special Students. The Beginning of Scholarships. Dr. Raymond's Personality, Character, and Policies. The Criticisms of Alumnæ. Falling off of Numbers of Collegiate Students. Dr. Raymond's Great Work.

As the history of Dr. Raymond's thirteen years as president of Vassar College is reviewed, his greatest work seems perhaps the establishing and maintaining of a collegiate standard for the new institution. How constantly he was working towards his high ideal for the intellectual life of the College is seen by the bare narrative of facts in regard to the development of the curriculum. In the year of opening, 1865, no satisfactory entrance requirements could be set and only a tentative course of study could be stated. By 1874-75 a strong college curriculum was established and the entrance requirements were on a par with those of the universities for men at the time. The steps by which these results were achieved are interesting.

In the first plan two distinct courses were outlined, the classical and the scientific. In each, the work was prescribed for the first two years, but in the junior and senior years each student elected three of certain stated studies. It was found, however, that the division of classical and scientific courses did not work well in practice, for (we quote President Raymond's report for the National Centennial of 1876) "very few students

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were prepared at the outset to make an election which involved so much; and many desired combinations of studies differing in some respects from both the courses laid down, combinations often equally good, and in some cases better adapted to the real want of the student." The plan developed in 1870-73 embodied the following principles:

1. "The course of studies is a *prescribed* one to the middle of the sophomore year, and a *regulated* one throughout.
2. "The prescribed part of the course embraces a due proportion of those *strictly disciplinary branches* which, when left to the option of the student, are almost wholly neglected or so slightly studied as to be useless, but which, if thoroughly taught, experience proves to be the best possible preparative for advanced studies in science, literature, or philosophy.
3. "The *number of branches* which any student may simultaneously pursue is rigidly limited. Three distinct branches, not previously pursued, together with one art-study to which a definite time is allotted, are the established complement.
4. "The diploma of the institution, and membership in its regular classes, have a *definite educational significance* on the recognized collegiate scale—each being a guaranty that the student has passed examinations, intended to be test-examinations, on a certain number of specified branches, in a well-adjusted and comprehensive curriculum."

The development of this plan is worthy of note. The catalogue of 1870-71 shows that in that year the course was prescribed only through the freshman year and that it included courses in Latin, French, and mathematics throughout the year with some work in natural history in the second semester, and during the year incidental lectures on physiology and hygiene and

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lessons in linear drawing. Work in English composition was given throughout the course, in elocution in the first and fourth years. After the freshman year, each student was allowed to elect three studies from the published curriculum, but no student was permitted to take more than the equivalent of three full studies at a time, together with one art study. In the catalogue of 1872-73, a notable change in the curriculum occurs: the prescribed work is extended throughout the first semester of the sophomore year. In the freshman year, the three main studies are Latin and a second language which may be French, German, or Greek, and mathematics; in the first semester of the sophomore year, English literature, Latin, and mathematics. Lectures on ancient history supplement the extra work before mentioned. The conditions for elective work in the rest of the course are the same as before. A comparison between the curriculum thus established and the curriculum in use in Harvard, Yale, and the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1874-75 may serve to show how far Vassar College had carried out the Founder's purpose of "an institution which should accomplish for young women what our colleges are accomplishing for young men."

The catalogues of 1874-75 of Harvard, Yale, the College of New Jersey, and Vassar are made the basis of comparison.

Vassar in 1874-75 was in line with Harvard, Yale, and Princeton in prescribing a certain amount of work in the college course, although she did not prescribe as much as they did, and in making the backbone of that work Latin and mathematics; but for Greek, which was the third foundation pier for Yale and Princeton at least, at Vassar French or German could be substituted.

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If Greek was presented on entrance, only two semesters of it were required and the amount was small.[1]

AMOUNT OF WORK PRESCRIBED	SUBJECTS							
	Latin	Greek	Mathematics	Science	Modern Languages	Philosophy	English	History
HARVARD: Freshman year + ½ of Sophomore and Junior	3½ hours	3½	2	5½	5	3½	2	1
YALE: Except a small choice in Junior and Senior years (X means that the number of hours was not indicated)	X For 2 yrs.; 3rd year, a class. lang. or math.	X	X	X	X	X		X
NEW JERSEY: All of Freshman and Sophomore years. Ten hours Junior Ten hours Senior	8	12	8	12	1	6	2	
VASSAR: Freshman year + ½ Sophomore	10	5 or 5 of German or French	10				5	

Side by side with the difficulties of shaping a curriculum had gone the problems of grading the students of the early years. We have already referred to the president's statements in his Vienna report about the lamentable lack of regular preparation on the part of the first students who entered. Of the 353 who were

[1] The catalogue of 1874-75 states that the two semesters included Grammar Exercises, Xenophon and Herodotus, but the unit of reading is not stated. The President's report of June, 1875, shows that the first two semesters of Greek taught in the college (of which the two entrance semesters were to be an equivalent) included only Grammar and Book I of Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

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accepted, only one-fourth or one-third had been well taught. The great majority were not well grounded even in the ordinary English branches, while their Latin "usually had been 'finished' with reading very imperfectly a little Cæsar and Vergil, and the algebra and geometry, though perhaps in general better taught, had not infrequently been studied in easy abridgments." It was found impossible to make any classification of the students in the first year. By the beginning of the next year, however, some general classification was possible.

It was as difficult work to establish on a firm basis the standard of entrance requirements as it was to establish the curriculum. In Broome's *Historical and Critical Discussion of College Admission Requirements*, p. 53, a comparative table is given showing college admission subjects for 1870. If Vassar's entrance requirements for 1870 are added to the table,[1] we see by in-

[1] Vassar.

LATIN	GREEK	MATHEMATICS	HISTORY or GEOGRAPHY	ENGLISH
1870 Vergil, two books Cicero, four orations Cæsar, four books Andrews' Latin lessons 1871 Vergil, Aeneid, two books Georgics, two books Eclogues, six Cicero, six orations Cæsar, four books	Grammar and Exercises + Xenophon and Herodotus (amount not stated), or one year of German or French	Robinson's University Algebra to equations of Second Degree	Ancient Greece and Rome Physical Geography	Quackenbos's Rhetoric

Vassar by 1871 was in line with the universities in standard of entrance except in regard to Greek and in that she did not require Plane Geometry. That she added in 1874-75.

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spection first that the amount of Latin reading was less; second that Greek was entirely optional and one year of French or German could be offered instead of Greek; third that plane geometry was not required. The Vassar catalogue of 1871 shows that the amount of Latin reading was raised the next year to the average amount required in the universities. In the catalogue of 1874-75, geometry is added to the entrance requirements and three semesters of French or German are required as an equivalent of two semesters of Greek for entrance. In 1875, then, at the end of the first decade, Vassar's entrance requirements were as rigid as those of the universities for men except in regard to Greek. In regard both to entrance requirements and collegiate work, President Raymond had done a tremendous work in making the college education of women fall in line with the education of men at the leading universities of the country. The substitution of French or German for Greek was the only modification of the standard curriculum that had been made for the feminine mind. Of course the struggle was not over yet.

In spite of the fact that a high standard of entrance requirements and college work had now been established, there was a serious menace to the intellectual life of the College in the existence of a growing preparatory department in the College and in the large number of students who were taking special courses, rather than the regular college course. It must, surely, be remembered that the lack of adequate preparation on the part of the early students who came to Vassar made the need of a preparatory department at the College an absolute one, but the satisfaction of the need was attended by the great danger of growth out of proportion to the size of the College. The table of attendance

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given in the *Historical Sketch of Vassar College, 1876*, p. 49, shows how the numbers in the preparatory department had increased from 123 out of a total of 361 in 1869 to 159 out of 384 in 1875. How great a danger to the collegiate rank of the work this growing preparatory department might be was appreciated by Dr. Raymond, as he showed in his report to the trustees in 1876. He first states clearly the danger and then outlines the policy which he thinks should be adopted:[1]

First: "It should be settled clearly that Vassar College is not to be allowed to lose its position in the forefront of the movement for Woman's Higher Education . . . and that the preparatory department is no integral part of the institution, but an accidental appendage, to be continued only so long as it subserves the College."

Second: "All this should be made clear to the public. . . . The preparatory department cannot be spared, but the separation between it and the College should be distinct and broad. The standard of admission to the College should be the recognized collegiate standard; and its diploma should be made to mean as much as that of any institution in the land that offers its advantages to young women."

President Raymond then touches upon the most difficult problem in connection with maintaining the collegiate standard, the question of funds and the need to keep the buildings filled, but he urges upon the board "an investment of faith," the need of being "true first to its most sacred trust—that of maintaining the high character of the College," and he has the courage to believe that then large gifts for its maintenance will come.

Another menace to the collegiate character of the academic work had been the existence of special

[1] *Life*, pp. 592 *et seq.*

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students who desired irregular work. The excellent departments of art and music, with their popular appeal and their almost inevitable rivalry with the academic work, had attracted many students, and in the early days many others had come poorly prepared, attracted by the novelty and prestige of a woman's college, in the hope of taking such a smattering of pretentious work as they had already lightly passed through in their school days. From the first, the College attempted to get these students in line with the regular work and as the result of this pressure from the faculty and of the public sentiment created by the really serious and able students, the numbers of specials steadily diminished from one hundred and twenty-three in 1868 to eleven in 1875. It must, of course, be remembered that during these years the preparatory department was increasing, so that undoubtedly many of the irregulars were being forced into preparatory work, but this meant that while the problem of the larger preparatory department became a more serious one, the separate problem of the specials was becoming less serious as they were merging into regular classes either preparatory or collegiate. President Raymond, in his report of 1873, comments with satisfaction on this change.

" During the first year—all were irregular. The following are the figures for the subsequent years:

	Regular	Irregular
1866-67	197	189
1867-68	216	123
1868-69	290	72
1869-70	323	59
1870-71	316	65
1871-72	357	58
1872-73	370	41

" With each succeeding year, the list of irregulars has consisted more nearly of such only as properly require

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a special course, until now the restriction has become absolute, and the irregulars are all of collegiate grade."

It is interesting to note that in 1871 the president was endeavoring to standardize the work for the "Second Degree," M.A., and with that in mind writes to President Eliot of Harvard for help.[1]

PRESIDENT ELIOT,
Dear Sir:

Has Harvard yet determined the conditions of her examinations for the Master's Degree and if so can you without much trouble put me in the way of ascertaining what they are?

We have Baccalaureates of three and four years' standing whose application for the Second Degree we have thus far deferred, unwilling to begin the farce of conferring it "in Course," and feeling that it hardly became this "infant of days" to initiate a reform. We are ambitious, however, of following close upon your good example.

Very truly yours,
J. H. RAYMOND.[2]

As a result of inquiry and discussion the Vassar catalogue for 1871-72 published the following statement:

"Candidates for the Second Degree must pass satisfactory examinations in studies which have been approved by the Faculty as equivalent to a post-graduate course of two full years; and must present a dissertation on some literary or scientific subject."

This was a high standard and the College further showed its desire to insist on solid work for advanced

[1] Letter-file, p. 97, April 21, 1871.
[2] Tradition says that President Eliot replied: "We shall be happy to follow the lead of the ladies."

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degrees by adopting the policy of not conferring honorary degrees. The record seems to indicate that only one was ever conferred.

Another aim which President Raymond held before himself in connection with the work of the students was the foundation of scholarships which should enable students of great ability and small means to have the benefit of a college education and to give to the College the aid of their strong work in her formative years.

Matthew Vassar had created an Auxiliary Fund of $50,000, the income of which was to be used for the partial payment of board and tuition for students in the regular course who had shown ability in their work. One scholarship, the Fox, had also been founded before 1871. But these funds were by no means adequate for the needs that the president saw. In his reports to the Board of Trustees in 1871 and 1875, he speaks in the highest terms of the work of the young women who had been aided by the Vassar Auxiliary Fund; and then states that other pupils of ability have been kept in College through aid from private sources. He makes an eloquent appeal for scholarships which shall bring the rates of tuition within the reach of those of limited means, which shall unite " the money of the wealthy with the brains and brainwork of talented youth in an alliance honorable to both and beneficent to all mankind." His words bore fruit and two years after his death the completion of a fund for two scholarships was announced by the alumnæ, one the " Hannah Lyman," the other the " Raymond " scholarship.

The development of the College in the first decade was along these lines of standardizing the work of preparation and of the College course, and of seeking for funds to help able girls to have a college education.

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There was naturally in these early years no corresponding growth in the material possessions of the College, either in gifts of buildings or in additional endowment. The treasurer's report of July 1, 1875, shows the aggregate amount of unproductive and productive property, and the figures are not uninteresting.[1] Compared with the treasurer's report of 1871, the total shows a gain of $76,723.82.

The bare statistics, the stated requirements of the College curriculum, leave all unsaid about the character of the life of the early students, and that subject indeed demands a separate treatment. This chapter which has dealt largely with the significant features of President Raymond's administration, that first formative decade of the College, has hardly pictured the man, but his personality is as clearly impressed upon the early days of the College as is that of the Founder himself. A man of fifty-one when Vassar opened in 1865, he was always a figure of great personal dignity. The students remembered his power, the moral force of his chapel talks, his devoted Christian faith, the unquestioned justice of his decisions, his glowing ardor for strong, intellectual work. They remembered too the fine, rich voice with which he read and interpreted Shakespeare to them; his love of music; his delight in flowers; his feeling for the beauty of order and orderliness.

More direct testimony to President Raymond's character than memory and reminiscence is his own letter-file, 542 pages of manuscript, carbon copies of his own correspondence about the College. In fine, cramped hand and stately literary style, he allays the fears of anxious parents, pours oil on troubled waters of faculty differences, diplomatically consults trustees, or sends

[1] See Appendix IV.

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keen questionnaires to candidates for professorships. Throughout his correspondence, unfailing tact meets every problem, and pellucid and dignified English transforms business letters into literary expression. The most dominant and recurrent theme is the insistence on the highest standard of work for all who are working in the College, alike for the teachers and the taught. The same moral forcefulness which impressed the student body has stamped these letters with the president's earnest dignity and power.

One significant point in President Raymond's policies remains to be noted: his attitude towards the questions of the day and the sphere of women. When Professor Backus wrote his obituary, he referred to the only criticism that had been brought against him,—the charge of ultra-conservatism. "Beset by the prejudices of over-conservative men and by the exhortations of over-radical men, threatened by the dangers that attend great social emergency, he brought to his task an unwearying patience, well-developed power of observation, a cautiousness that seemed at times to border on cowardice, but it was the cautiousness which attends the heroic man. His ear has been attentive to the voice of duty, and when she has bid him act, he has been the man of courage. The quality of caution in President Raymond has been of incalculable value, not only to Vassar College, but also to the great educational interests, which it represents; for Vassar is beyond all question the leader in the education of women, and other colleges of women are following to success in her track."[1]

In a speech delivered in February, 1875, on the occasion of the opening of the Museum, President Raymond

[1] In the Poughkeepsie *Eagle*, August 8, 1878, quoted, *Life*, p. 714.

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discussed the relation of the College to the questions of the day. After referring to the increased opportunities for a college education for women which had come in the last ten years in the opening to them of the University of Michigan and of Cornell University and the founding of Wellesley and Smith, he remarked:

"Coincidently with these educational tendencies, the period has been marked with a widespread agitation of new problems, all bearing upon the scope of woman's responsibility in church and state, and all looking to the probable enlargement of her sphere and the more perfect utilization of her energies."

He then announced in a significant paragraph the policy which the College has since maintained:

"In the discussion of these questions, educational, social, religious, political, Vassar College takes no sides. The institution was not founded, and is not administered in the interest of any doctrine or any class of doctrines. Its business is education, in the broadest sense, and exclusively that. Its doors are open to all, without regard to sect or party; and here thought is free in respect to those varieties of opinion in which the good may differ. The only thing that we ask of our pupils is that there should be thought, honest and earnest, and the aim of our training is, not to inculcate a particular creed or system of belief, but to furnish the youthful mind with the well-established and undisputed results of past inquiry, to inform it clearly in respect to the great questions in philosophy and science which now divide the thinking world, and so to develop and discipline its faculties that it shall be able in due time to form its own opinions, and to understand and explain the grounds on which those opinions rest."[1]

[1] *Life*, pp. 597-98.

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The wisdom of this policy for a pioneer college for women was generally accepted. The president's personal attitude towards the sphere of woman and her abilities cannot occupy much space in the history of the College. Yet it is perhaps significant that at this time so great and devoted a champion of the cause apparently believed that woman's intellectual work was always to be relative and subordinate to man's.

In 1870, in an address[1] on "The Demand of the Age for a Liberal Education for Women and How It Should be Met," Dr. Raymond after discussing woman's capacity to receive the higher culture had stated also that in the field of scientific investigation women have "a womanly work" to perform, and "In the economies of science, just as in those of the household and the church, there is a division according to sex; and then will the great interests involved in each be best conserved and best promoted, when the industries of both sexes are most perfectly united, and the law of their natural relationship most strictly obeyed. The analogy holds too, I suspect, in this particular, that in neither is the womanly office, as a general rule, independent of the man's; and that, whenever the two sexes work together, the former is naturally subsidiary and auxiliary to the latter. Everywhere and always, Eve is Adam's willing, deft, and beautiful 'help-meet.' There is, of course, no impossibility in a woman's originating and carrying to successful results a comprehensive and intricate series of scientific experiments, or combining, by bold and original generalization, a mass of recorded observations; she may, in special circum-

[1] Given before the National Baptist Educational Convention, *Documentary History of Vassar College*, I, No. 23.

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stances, initiate and organize advance movements in scientific discovery, and defend, in the fields of controversy, the points she has taken. As a rule, however, women are not constitutionally well fitted for such work; and, at the best, the honors of leadership do not sit gracefully upon them. But, as associates and aids, they are admirable; and they will always excel in those parts of the common labor which especially require delicate manipulation, precision of method, patience of detail or delays, minute analysis, conscientious elegance of arrangement and exhibition."

The president's attitude, however, is to be viewed in the light of the state of woman's education and work at the time. For example, as late as 1873, a reactionary treatise on woman's education had appeared, *Sex in Education,* by Edward H. Clarke, M.D. This stated that the solution of the problem of woman's sphere must be the physiological one and maintained that woman's organism demanded a different education from men's and an easier. This thesis was supported by the evidence of many pathological cases of women who had broken down under the strain of the higher education. The book called forth much newspaper discussion and volumes of indignant protest and criticism of Dr. Clarke's statements and methods of inference,[1] but the fact that so reactionary a book on woman's education appeared at this time helps us to appreciate how great was the work that President Raymond accomplished in establishing and standardizing a college education for women. And it must be remembered that there were still violent opponents to Matthew Vassar's thesis " that

[1] *Sex and Education,* a Reply to Dr. E. H. Clarke's *Sex in Education,* edited by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe; *No Sex in Education,* by Mrs. E. B. Duffey.

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woman, having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development."

Dr. Raymond, indeed, stood among the pioneers for the cause of collegiate education for women, and was a tower of defense against critics and disbelievers. An article in *Godey's Lady's Book* for April, 1870, "The Two Educations," had arraigned the Vassar curriculum for copying the "semi-obsolete systems which have existed in certain ancient universities," and for devoting too much time to "Greek, Latin, and the abstract mathematics" to the exclusion of studies better "calculated to benefit the student." After a careful, analytical reply to this Dr. Raymond voiced a splendid *credo* which is perhaps the high-water mark of his extant utterances on the subject of woman's education:

"And now, in conclusion, let me tell our friend what is the real sin of Vassar, for he has missed it altogether. The 'serious error,' if such there be, 'on which its system is based,' is simply this—that woman should not be excluded from the benefits of this higher culture. If woman is to have a liberal education at all, she must get it on the same conditions with others; there can be no doubt about that. But ought she to have it at all? That is the only question. Has she strength of brain enough to receive it? Has she sufficient moral earnestness and energy of purpose to carry her through? Will thorough training do for her what it does for a man? Will it not destroy feminine grace and delicacy? Will it not break down her physical health? Will it give clearness, breadth, force, and fertility to her mind; dignity, weight, refinement, and symmetry to her character? Has God or the coming age any work for her to do in the family, in society, in the church, in science and letters, in any of the intellectual professions or arts, which calls for such training? Is there any demand for it in the community? In this fair, broad land of

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ours, teeming with souls and industries, are there any young women who have the desire, the capacity, and the leisure for study, and for whom the means should be provided? These are grave questions. We do not assume to answer them dogmatically; time will determine. If the answer be in the negative, then must Vassar College be pronounced a mistake—not the mistake, however, of its managers, but of its generous Founder and his princely gift. Vassar College is a school for liberal education, or it is a stupendous solecism. For any other purpose, its costly collections, its Library of ancient and modern literature, that ' staff of learned professors which leaves so little to be desired '—the whole thing is a blunder and a waste. The sin of the Trustees and Faculty is that they believe it to be neither, and that, sharing in the confidence of their noble friend, the Founder, and thoroughly convinced that God and the age are calling for the experiment, they proceed to make it without anxiety as to the result. . . .'' [1]

In the last years of Dr. Raymond's life certain formal criticisms against the College and the administration were published by a small body of the alumnæ. The pamphlet [2] brings certain serious charges against the College of the day and says that the charges are made because the authorities at the College do not seem to feel that the existing conditions demand strenuous efforts for larger endowments. The first criticisms are in regard to the living arrangements of the students. The dormitory system is said to be defective, as the rooms are overcrowded to an intolerable extent; the building contains no passenger elevator; the heating apparatus is insufficient in many rooms, and the gas of a poor quality. More serious are the charges brought against

[1] *Life*, pp. 620-21, from *Godey's Lady's Book*.

[2] Pamphlet issued by the Cincinnati Association of Vassar Alumnæ in 1876.

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the intellectual work of the College. "The absence of any thorough provision for the study of history is a glaring deficiency in any scheme of liberal education." There is need of a larger instructing force in the observatory. The teaching force contains many inefficient members and this is due to the fact that Vassar's salaries are paltry. To sum up, this Cincinnati pamphlet is a printed arraignment of the College authorities for too great complacency over the *status quo* and a demand that better living conditions and higher intellectual standards for both curriculum and faculty should be established.

The attack was answered by five of the alumnæ who were at that time members of the College faculty, in another pamphlet entitled "A Few Facts about the Vassar College of 1876." This statement showed the ill-judged mixture of truth and untruth in the published criticisms and the efforts that were already being made inside the College to better certain conditions that had been pointed out—that new single rooms have already been added to relieve the overcrowding; the resident physician has been working each year to secure from the trustees an elevator; the gas is not poor and larger burners have been placed in the rooms; improved plans for heating are already under consideration.

In regard to the criticisms of the educational equipment, certain points are admitted, certain contested. The need for endowed professorships is granted; the immediate need for the establishment of a chair of history is regarded as debatable. It is positively denied that inferior ability and incompetency constitute the rule among the teachers, and statistics are given to show that Vassar's salaries are not small, either *per se*, or in comparison with those given elsewhere. And finally it

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is maintained that those within the College are as alive to its needs as the alumnæ outside and are working diligently to secure both better living conditions and the highest educational standard.

It must have been hard for President Raymond during the last years of his administration to receive criticism which contained so striking an injustice to his labors for the intellectual standards of the College. An impartial survey of his work in establishing standard entrance requirements and a curriculum which was a real equivalent of the curricula at the universities for men and of his persistent efforts to have the students take the regular college course rather than special courses shows how high his intellectual ideal for the College was and how indefatigably he worked to develop it. The president himself was as fully alive to the material needs of the College as were the alumnæ, and in his reports to the trustees year after year he had referred to the overcrowding of the rooms, the poor quality of the gas, the need for a passenger elevator, the inadequacy of the heating apparatus, and improvements were being made slowly along these lines and as the money on hand would permit (a thing critics never consider!).

Dr. Raymond had to face in his last years these criticisms which were indeed partially true in regard to the facts stated, but largely false in regard to his own inactivity and the general spirit of the College. He had also the discouragement of seeing the number of the collegiate students gradually diminishing. His report to the trustees in 1874-75 attributes this to " the general depression of business " at the time. Again in his report of 1875-76 in commenting on the diminished attendance, he says that the financial condition of the

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country is not the only cause for it; another is found "in the establishment of new female colleges,[1] and the opening of several leading male colleges for the admission of the other sex." He adds: "At all these institutions, I believe, the charges are lower than ours, while the educational advantages they offer profess to be equal, if not higher." In spite of a slight increase in numbers the next year, the outlook seemed discouraging and the president's last year could hardly have been an easy one.

Yet the pioneer work that he did for woman's education cannot easily be overestimated. He pre-eminently, with the support of the Founder, the first faculty, and the early students, demonstrated the fact that there was no kind of education peculiarly fitted to the feminine mind. He went on to establish a high educational standard for entrance and for the work done in College, and when once entrance requirements and college academic standards were made equivalent to those in the universities for men, he devoted all his energy to maintaining the standards attained. And this he did by urging repeatedly on individual students a regular college course rather than a special one. And as he cajoled and coerced and persuaded the special and the superficial students into lines of regular work, he was constantly seeking to secure aid and establish scholarships for students in the regular course who were able, but poor.

A high tribute to his own work as a teacher is paid by one of his pupils:[2]

[1] Smith and Wellesley opened in 1875, and as both were in Massachusetts they at once struck at the Eastern constituency of Vassar.

[2] *Life*, pp. 678-79.

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"Dr. Raymond's attitude as a teacher of metaphysics impressed students as being judicial, critical, and courageous. The subject studied was usually the Scottish philosophy, but the work of the classroom was as little limited as time would permit. The first lesson the students were taught was that no authority ought to be unquestioned; the second, that the benefit to be obtained from a semester's work in philosophy was entirely dependent upon the mental vigor which the student brought to bear upon its problems; and the third, that honest and independent methods ought to be followed out, whatever their apparent conclusions."

Comment is made also upon his insistence on exact use of language from his pupils; his "stern condemnation of disingenuous reasoning"; "his generous devotion to truth." Many letters from other students, written after his death, attest their appreciation of his high intellectual ideals for the College and his own intellectual integrity.

While he was laboring to advance the intellectual training of women, at the same time he had established another fundamental principle for Vassar besides the tradition of hard academic work: namely, that in order to give young women a well-rounded education, they must all be housed where the College should be personally responsible for them, that is, in residence in college buildings; and that the atmosphere of the College should be as far as possible a home atmosphere, with personal care for the young women who were away from their homes.

And besides this personal oversight of their morals and manners, direct instruction, President Raymond thought, should be given to the young women along moral and religious lines as well as along intellectual. And this belief he carried out in the formation of

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Bible classes taught by the faculty, in defining the functions of the lady principal, and in his own sermons and chapel talks. He was a tremendous moral force through the earnestness of his appeals to the students and his words carried such weight that special talks were remembered long afterwards,—talks on thoroughness in work, on energy in exercise, on true friendship, on righteous self-government. One girl said: "No one knows the president till she has heard him thunder and lighten a little."[1] And another wrote: "I wish I could give any idea of one of his bursts of righteous indignation and the effect it had upon you. It seemed a fiery current that swept everything before it, withering and consuming every unworthy thing."[2] By both chapel talks and sermons, he inspired the students constantly to new spiritual ideals and to vigorous effort for spiritual self-development. The College, in accordance with the Founder's purpose, was to be non-sectarian, but in the president's ideal for it, it was to be deeply religious.

It was fitting that when President Raymond laid down the yoke of his heavy labors suddenly in the summer of 1878, his students, mourning their great loss and remembering the character of the man, thought of Matthew Arnold's words on Arnold of Rugby:

"O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practiced that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!
Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,

[1] *Life*, p. 663.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 681.

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Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
Prompt, unwearied as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who, with half-open eyes,
Tread the borderland dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succourest!—This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth."

It was an appropriate tribute to the quality of spiritual leadership that had marked Dr. Raymond's life upon earth. When death came upon him in the harness, in the midst of the discouragements which unfair criticisms had caused, a great and abiding work had been established which outlives those criticisms. At the end of his administration Vassar College was a residence college with careful supervision exercised over its students. It bore the stamp of earnest, moral purpose and non-sectarian religious spirit. It stood for strong, regular academic work and it had established for all time in the educational world the truth that woman had "the same right as man to intellectual culture and development." Through this formative period of the College, Dr. Raymond had been a powerful balance wheel, to counteract superficiality on the one hand and radicalism on the other. He had been a figure of dignity and culture who represented the new college with distinction in the educational world. Above all, he had made his great aim the establishing of a strong and honest preparation and curriculum for the four years' college course for women at Vassar. And it is due largely to his work that the first story of the College superstructure was laid so firmly upon the great foundation.

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V

COLLEGE LIFE IN THE FIRST DECADE

The First Social Rules. Three Dominant Personalities. Clubs and Festivities. Student Publications. Humorous Articles. Serious Editorials and Essays. The Pioneer Spirit.

WHEN Matthew Vassar was beginning to think of his great scheme for a well-endowed college for women and was writing for advice and approval of his plan to distinguished educators, he received one letter so full of fear that it would have utterly discouraged the faint-hearted.

Mr. William Chambers, of Edinburgh, had been consulted about the desirability of establishing the College. He replied that the proposal to endow an institution of a high class for board and education of several hundred young ladies filled him with astonishment and consternation. "I cannot imagine such a thing. Boarding-schools with but thirty girls are difficult to manage satisfactorily, and much above the hundred in a day academy is impracticable. It has been by exercising a marvelous degree of vigilance and discipline, such as you could not carry out among your high-spirited and highly dressed republican young ladies, that the Scottish Institution has been attended with success." He recommends him to pause and consider whether he might not modify his benevolently conceived scheme, which he fears would never work to his satisfaction or be creditable to his good name. A

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safer investment, he thinks, would be a " seminary for the blind, the deaf and dumb, or the weak in intellect! "[1]

Similar to this distrust of the actions of a large body of young women are the fears expressed by Miss Hannah Lyman, the first lady principal of the College, when she was considering the position:

" My dear Dr. Raymond: Lying awake last night, . . . I asked myself what I was to do with two hundred girls, all strangers to me. . . . If I were to take a school and organize and carry it on, I could do it up to certain limits as to number, as I did long ago with more than seventy pupils. . . .

" My theory has always been that boarding-schools are necessary evils; that to make them as like a family as possible is the best way. But I see also that it is impossible that women should receive the highest kind of culture without large institutions. There they must be allowed to develop individually as far as possible."[2]

This dread of the experiment of bringing so many " high-spirited girls " together seems to have gone in part into the making of the plans and rules for the new college. The *Prospectus of the Vassar Female College,* issued in May, 1865, and the *Students' Manual, by Order of the Trustees and Faculty, adopted November, 1867,* surveyed together, show what precautions were taken to insure a decorous and womanly behavior on the part of all the young ladies.

In the *Prospectus,* indeed, no words occur more fre-

[1] " Quoted in part from the Founder's book of copies, from his own letter to S. Austin Allibone, March 26, 1862, but in fuller detail from a note of the author's made years since from an unremembered source. The letter was written in 1858." *Before Vassar Opened,* pp. 207-08.

[2] *Life,* pp. 598-99.

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quently than "womanly," "ladylike," and "feminine." While, with marvelous discernment for the time, the framers of the *Prospectus* make physical education fundamental to all the rest, still "physical accomplishments *suitable for ladies to acquire*" are to be taught by a "lady professor" and even the manikin for the instruction in physiology is to be "female." After the intellectual education is outlined and the moral and religious education sketched, domestic education and social education are given as prominent a part. "The household is, by common consent, woman's peculiar province," runs the preamble to this part, and stately paragraphs assure anxious parents that the College will do all it can "to maintain a just appreciation of the dignity of woman's home sphere; to foster a womanly interest in its affairs." The students are to be taught "to do with their own hands whatever a *lady* ought to know how to do." The pages on social education become more eloquent:

"In society also woman has a special place and mission, which should not be lost sight of in the composition or conduct of her educational course. It is hers to refine, illumine, purify, adorn—not, under any ordinary circumstances, to govern or contend. She should be as intelligent as a man, as broad in the range of her information, as alert and facile (if less robust) in the use of her faculties, more delicate and pure in her tastes; her moral aims should be equally definite, her moral tone equally high; but her *methods* should be all her own, always and only *womanly*.

"Oratory and debate (whether public or private) are not feminine accomplishments and there will be nothing in the College arrangements to encourage the practice of them.

"The ability of reading aloud for the instruction and entertainment of others . . . has come to be

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widely appreciated as a most delightful and desirable, as it is an eminently feminine accomplishment."

Conversation also is to be taught as " one of the highest social accomplishments " and " one of the chief instruments of woman's power for good." So the " young ladies " are to be trained " first, to think for themselves on topics of current interest, and then to express their convictions modestly, but frankly and with earnest sincerity; . . . to maintain their opinions (if controverted) in a ladylike manner, and to yield gracefully when discussion sharpens into debate, and temper is likely to lose more than truth to gain by its continuance." In composition, letter-writing especially as " peculiarly suited to womanly uses " will be taught, with particular instruction " respecting those proprieties of form and felicities of manner, of which every lady should be mistress."

It is not anticipating the progress of this history to add that this ultra-feminine tone of the College disappeared quickly with the " female " from the name, from the silver spoons, and the building, but not before this same mid-Victorian attitude toward ladies had formed the body of rules comprised in the first *Students' Manual*, " intended to guide the conduct of the students," as the dignified preamble runs. Certainly the laws laid down were intended to cover all problems of " conduct " as far as they could be foreseen, for besides directions about entering and leaving, attendance, college hours, and time signals, rules are laid down for students' apartments, classrooms, library and reading-room, music-rooms, art-gallery, dining-hall, storeroom and laundry, College office, infirmary, entrances, halls and stairways, visitors and visiting, College grounds, societies and public meetings, and . . . " mis-

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cellaneous." And not only the completeness of the scope of the rules but their nature shows how watchful and detailed was the care exercised over the young ladies in the College.

In the first place, the whole day was mapped out for every girl (except on Saturday and Sunday) from rising at 6 A.M. and morning prayers at 6.45 A.M., to retiring at 10 P.M., and twice in each day twenty minutes were "secured to each student as a period of quiet retirement and privacy." Rules of every description and of the greatest minuteness are added. "Ink-bottles must be kept in some secure place," "matches must be struck on the match-vases only." When students are dismissed from a class, they are "to leave the room with decorum and in silence." "All the students are required to be present at each meal unless prevented by sickness or excused by their corridor teacher." "Free and cheerful conversation is recommended during meals; but where so large a number are conversing at once, subdued voices are necessary to the common comfort." "All visitors to students will be received in the College parlors by the lady principal or her assistant. They must bring written introductions from the parent of the young ladies with whom they seek interviews." "Special permission must be obtained of the lady principal for going out of the building after dark, except on proper occasions to the observatory or the calisthenium." "Plainness and simplicity of attire" are expected, and indeed in a printed letter sent by Miss Lyman to the parents of students, she urges this ardently. "We may beg that *expensive trimmings* should be entirely laid aside, and may *suggest* that the skirts of dresses be left plain, unless in remaking some fold is needed to hide a defect."

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With how much fear and care an attempt was made to see that these rules were carried out is shown by the *First Annual Report of the Lady Principal of Vassar Female College,* tied with white silk ribbon and written in Miss Lyman's delicate, slanting hand. The special problem of the lady principal had been, she said, "how to individualize the students so as to guard against those evils incident to so large an assembly of immature young people; how to insure that each one without a galling espionage should feel herself known and cared for." The first step in solving this problem was in the appointment of corridor teachers, who should each be responsible for a section of the building and who should meet together with Miss Lyman once a week to report to her on their special problems and on the needs of special students. Miss Lyman tells also of her anxiety over the problem of assigning roommates, of correcting and forming the manners of the students in the dining-hall, of her daily visits to the infirmary "to give words of counsel" to the sick, of her Saturday morning half-hour talks to all the students about "the morals of manners."

She is encouraged to feel that her efforts have been rewarded, for she ends by remarking: "Among the young ladies there has been a steady improvement in order, decorum, and a delicate sense of propriety, and principals of other schools who have visited this have invariably noted the quiet as remarkable. The severe study of the students has a constant tendency to elevate them above the frivolities of ordinary boarding-schools; and while it would be too much to hope that all such evils have been escaped, it may be believed that, even in its first year, Vassar College will compare favorably with other and older establishments."

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That phrase "of ordinary boarding-schools" suggests the cause for the tone of both prospectus and manual. The College was, in its infancy, even to its makers, an enlarged boarding-school in its social life, and this was to be shaped and guided along the lines that the safe, conventional finishing-school had laid down. The utmost watchfulness, precaution, and anxiety must preside over the care of the young women who came; and indeed there was nothing strange in this point of view at that time. When society itself exacted of any such institution such restrictions, the independent, self-reliant type of college girl had not yet developed or been imagined, and while many strong, mature young women of high aspirations assembled at the opening of Vassar, many of the girls for whom the rules were planned were of the regular boarding-school type, and had come to the College, not for serious work, but for a more showy smattering of accomplishments than could elsewhere be acquired. Not only did the ideals of work of such students have to be raised, but their lives had to be regulated and guarded.

How the real college woman developed in this boarding-school atmosphere will be shown presently. But first let us take a glimpse at the distinctive college life which the three hundred young women assembled in the Main Building shaped, out of which have grown many of the customs and traditions of the Vassar of to-day.

There were three dominating personalities in the "powers that be" who played a large part in the social life of the students of the first decade, President Raymond, Miss Lyman, and Maria Mitchell, and a word must be said about the part which each played. Dr. Raymond's personality and influence have already been

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THE LAKE WALK

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described; and his stately presence, his fulminating chapel talks, his brilliant readings of Shakespeare are among the traditions of the College. The students were not always overpowered, however, by his dignity, but met him on more friendly terms, as an anecdote recorded by an alumna shows. "On one occasion he playfully ridiculed us for the drooping, listless gait with which many students performed their daily sixty minutes' walk, saying: 'Young ladies, I see you sauntering through these grounds like prisoners weighed down by chain and ball. I would rather have you bound forth to meet your exercise, rejoicing in the blessings of God's free air and bracing wind.' Two days later, when a jovial group of girls rushed out of a side entrance with such vigor as nearly to overthrow Dr. Raymond's entering figure, they laughingly justified themselves, 'Oh, well, we were only bounding forth to meet our exercise as he directed us to do.'"[1] At other times, meeting the students in the grounds, he would talk to them about the flowers in the garden, or the sunset colors. The girls were not sure of his humor, and once, to test it, the mental philosophy class sent him on his birthday a huge bouquet of roses to commemorate "his constant public mention of the rose's fragrance as the archetype of pleasant sensation,"[2] but they thought he did not see the point. Dr. Raymond's own account of the first Christmas day at Vassar College gives better than anything else can the tone of dignified fellowship, which he never seems to have lost on the most informal occasions. "We had them (Mr. Vassar and Miss G.) and the Tenneys to dine with us yesterday, and how I wished you could have been

[1] *Life*, p. 665.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 666.

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there, too. Miss G. had thoughtfully brought along a bottle of the famous Springside gooseberry, in which we drank the health of the Founder, the memory of the absent, and many returns of Christmas dinner in the College, and then adjourned to the parlors—where the crowd were gathering for the tree. It was a right holiday and Christian sight, the hired men and servants all draped in their best, their wives on their arms, and their children in their hands, mingling modestly with professors and students, and the venerable Founder beaming on all.'' [1]

Maria Dickinson McGraw, '67, gives among delightful reminiscences of the first year at Vassar [2] an account of this Christmas celebration and how, to escape the watchful vigilance of Mr. Cyrus Swan, '' the superintendent of material things,'' she, two professors, the College physician, and the gardener stole out surreptitiously on Christmas eve and dug up one of the little evergreens from the campus, put it into a laundry tub, and carried it to the College parlor. Mrs. McGraw's account of the first students' meeting gives an anecdote of Dr. Raymond, which suggests that the students felt at times that they must act independently of his dominant personality. There was a question as to what was to be done with certain surplus funds left from the Founder's Day celebration, and Mrs. McGraw says:

'' We decided to ask for a students' meeting to consider the matter. Permission was given for the meeting; and after prayers on a Saturday morning, President Raymond turned to me and said, ' Now, Miss Dickinson, for your meeting! ' I said the request was for a meeting of the students' association. (I had

[1] MS. Letter, December 26, 1865.
[2] *Vassar Miscellany*, March, 1914.

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lately learned the phrase and not its technical meaning.) The president looked alarmed and said rather severely, 'I know of no such organization.' I explained that I simply meant a meeting of the students by themselves, without the faculty. He looked puzzled—such a thing had never been thought of—hesitated a moment, then, with a bit of a smile, looked up and said, 'The faculty are devited.' Miss Mitchell and Professor Tenney rose at once and left the chapel. The others followed slowly, looking very doubtful. When the chapel door closed upon them, Dr. Raymond said cheerfully, 'Now, Miss Dickinson, you will need a chairman.' I replied, 'Yes, President Raymond, we will choose one as soon as you have gone.' Our good president's face was a study, he said nothing, gathered up his notes and 'other spectacles,' and slowly walked the length of the chapel amid the densest silence, while the awed students sat with bated breath. The outcome of this entirely harmless meeting was a vote to ask if we might not use the Founder's Day balance to buy a flag; and I was deputed to make the formal request."

A literary club, the Philalethean Society, was formed in the first year and Dr. Raymond was made the first president, but here also the students soon showed signs of wishing to manage their own activities, for, as Mrs. McGraw remarks dryly, "he was not re-elected." The president, however, was a tremendous figure in the formative period of the student life, and he was admired by the students always, if from a distance.

Mrs. McGraw gives a vivid picture of the lady principal as she appeared on the opening day of the College:

"Never had we seen so resplendent a person as was Miss Lyman—tall and large of frame, though rather spare, with wonderful snow-white curls framing the rarely fair and beautiful strong face. Her dress was of silvery-gray silk, her shoulders were draped with

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an exquisite white shawl; a white cap of finest lace, with a streamer of rose-pink ribbon on either side, covered the top and back of her head. I think she wore white kid gloves, but am not sure—her face and head so held my eyes."

Miss Lyman's elegance graced her words as well as her appearance, and one is not surprised to hear her saying on the occasion of the arrival of a fiancé: "Why, yes, certainly, Miss Dickinson, entertain him. But you know, Miss Dickinson, that we cannot have every Thomas, Richard, and Henry coming to see our young ladies!"

In one chapel talk, as Miss Wood relates in *Earliest Years at Vassar*,[1] "alluding to the custom of loading the walls of students' parlors with photographs of young men friends," she said: "'If you must have your—er—Julius Cæsar up where you can see him constantly'—a ripple of laughter went round the chapel and the sentence was not finished, but the photographs disappeared." Miss Wood tells also how particular Miss Lyman was in matters of dress, "insisting on change for supper, as if going out for the evening." "And in the matter of gloves she held all up to wear them at every College function. It was thought extremely elegant for even the one who was to deliver essay or poem on the chapel platform to wear white gloves."[2] Before all commencement exercises each member of the graduation class attired in her graduating dress was placed on a high walnut table in Miss Lyman's bedroom for inspection. Miss Wood says that Miss Lyman practiced what she preached in matters of personal attire,—was always beautifully dressed, and "made a picture as if she had stepped out of some old portrait."

[1] Page 25. [2] Page 23.

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As Dr. Raymond was the force of dignified paternalism in the College and Miss Lyman the queenly presence of the old-fashioned gentlewoman whose manners were a fine art, Maria Mitchell was essentially the new woman, and the symbol of her light might have been the comet which she discovered. Her life has been written in book and pamphlet;[1] a bust of her rugged face with its short curls is placed at the entrance of the Observatory, which she made famous, but no representation has really reproduced adequately her unique and vital presence. Miss Wood's delightful anecdotes bring her nearest. She was a feminist, "judging everything from the standpoint, 'How is this going to affect women?'" She was a moralist, disapproving of *Middlemarch*, even, as an immoral book. She was radical (for that day), was one of a small faculty group of Unitarians who met for discussion Sunday evenings in the Observatory. She adored children, and, away from her nieces and nephews, made the College girls the children of her devotion. Her annual "dome-parties" for her students were famous and "under the shadow of the telescope" were read those rhymes which she dashed off for all the girls at those times. Here is one:

"Sarah, Mary, Louise, and I
Have come to the crossroads to say good-by;
Bathed in tears and covered with dust,
We say good-by, because we must;
A circle of lovers, a knot of peers,
They in their youth and I in my years,
Willing to bear the parting and pain,
Believing we all shall meet again;
That if God is God and truth is truth,
We shall meet again and all in youth."

[1] *Maria Mitchell* by P. M. Kendall; *Maria Mitchell as Her Students Knew Her*, by M. K. Babbitt.

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In answer the girls would sing to the tune of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic":

"We're singing for the glory of Maria Mitchell's name;
She lives at Vassar College, and you all do know the same.
She once did spy a comet and she thus was known to fame,
Good woman that she was."

The personality of the woman comes out in certain unpublished letters, which show her light humor and her warm feeling. Regrettably, most of these are undated.

My dear President:

The young ladies who rush over to the observatory to tell me all they know, think that you alluded to me, to-night, in speaking of someone who told you of all your faults. I assure them that I could not be the person, for not only do I not know all, but if I undertook to tell all that I do know, it would take all the time I have, so none would be left to tell them of theirs.

Yrs, M. M.

P. S.—Miss Glover asks me if I intend to say "Yours respectfully."

In two other letters, in the same humorous way, she does tell the president some of his mistakes:

"I have worked away with a will, to find some fault with your capital discourse and have found it! You didn't do justice to the butterfly! The pretty little fellow furnishes me with the webs for what are called 'spider lines' in my telescopes. He methodizes his activity before he's born, and helps the astronomer measure the distances to the stars."

The next also is so delightful that it cannot be omitted:

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My good-natured President:

I want to hear you preach to-morrow, and I also want to see the moon pass over Aldebaran. (A printed statement of the time of the occultation is pasted on the letter here.)

Can't you let me do both? Will you stop at eleventhly or twelfthly? Or, why need you show us *all* sides of the subject? The moon never turns to us other than the one side we see, and did you ever know a fairer moon?

If I could stop this moon and do no more harm than Joshua did, I wouldn't ask such a favor of you, knowing, as I do, what a difficult thing it is for you to pause, when you are once started, and knowing also that I never want you to do so—*except this once.* Yours with all respect, even if it doesn't appear,

M. MITCHELL.[1]

These stories and letters bring more vividly before us the charm of the woman in everyday intercourse. It cannot be reiterated too often that it was a peculiarly happy thing for Vassar, at its foundation, to have, side by side with a gentlewoman of the old school who was graciously looking after the "morals of manners" of her young ladies, a woman distinguished in the field of science, passionate in her quest for knowledge, and devoted to the cause of woman which she served.

With such varying influences as these dominant in the College in its earliest years, the student life naturally developed in various ways. A more or less formal social life began to shape itself on the one hand in the foundation of clubs, establishment of annual festivities, growth of small customs, many of which are now interwoven in the traditions of the College.

[1] Published by the courtesy of Miss Cornelia Raymond.

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Clubs of all sorts were formed with startling rapidity; indeed, according to Mrs. McGraw, the plan of the Philalethean Society was originated in the first week while the girls were "still waiting for regular class work." Certainly it was well established in the first year as a literary society, and was divided into three chapters with Greek letter names. It was soon followed by a musical club called the Cecilian Society, by the Society for Religious Inquiry, and the Floral Society, which sprang up almost simultaneously. "Phil" still lasts, but the others have not survived. Neither have the Abenakis and the Laurel Baseball Clubs, although the athletic circle still sees very good baseball games played by the girls every spring. The Light Croquet Club, too, was ephemeral and so were the Boat Clubs of '68 with their fanciful names: Dido, Undine, Water Witch, Dolce far niente. The last name might, however, be a type for all the present use of the lake, as the flat-bottomed boats belonging to the College and the canoes owned by individual girls are used chiefly for drifting about and reading on warm spring days. In 1870 there were still other clubs in existence: the Société de Sévigné, the Society for Natural History, the Shakespeare Club, and by the time of the eleventh catalogue a Fine Arts Club and a Glee and Madrigal have been added. All now are dead.

But certain annual festivities established in the first year of the College had a longer life, and one, Founder's Day, is still observed. The first happy celebration of Founder's has been recorded in the chapter on the Founder. The next two anniversaries were of equal interest. The one that occurred on April 29, 1867, was celebrated by music, prayer, the reading of a paper,

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The Parthenæum, containing essays and poems, and then by an original colloquy, "The Triumph of Progress," in which the characters were the Muse of the Past and the Genius of Progress, with attendants, Science, Art, Literature, Religion, and Music. The student account records:

"As the Genius of Progress, in recounting her triumphs, spoke of Vassar College, alluding to its founder, she exclaimed, 'Behold his features,' when suddenly the curtains at the rear of the stage parted, and disclosed a bust of Mr. Vassar distinctly defined against the background of evergreens, and surrounded by the motto:

"*Serus in cœlum redeas!*" [1]

On the third Founder's Day the first part of the program was the same: music, prayer, the reading of *The Parthenæum,* an essay on Phosphorescence, the Jubel Overture, by Weber; but at the end an original cantata was rendered, "The Crown of Life," set to music by Professor Ritter. A chorus of students invoked the spirits of Earth, Sea, and Sky to help them render a worthy offering to the Founder. Each spirit proffered its treasure, but none was found worthy, until the Goddess of Wisdom appeared, proclaiming that "great thoughts and noble lives are the best offerings." "The exercises were closed with the 'Doxology.'" [2] Very different is the Founder's Day of the present, a gathering time for alumnæ at the College, marked by some brilliant outdoor pageant, or celebrated as an old English Mayday, with carols and dances and old English plays.

[1] *The Transcript,* June, 1867.
[2] *Ibid.,* May, 1868.

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The first anniversary program of the Philalethean Society was as great a conglomerate as the early Founder's: organ voluntary, prayer, music, three essays, then recitations by "Representatives of European States," who at the end "formed a beautiful tableau," and were addressed by Europe, who bade them follow her

"Forever on, towards perfect liberty."

Still more varied was the program for the second anniversary in 1867, for after the usual preambles of prayer, music, and essays, recitations in costume were given of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," and at the end a scene from "Henry VIII" was acted, an indication that even thus early the society was tending to the dramatic interest which is now its exclusive function. Now Philaletheis has given up its annual birthday, but produces each year three plays, which are admirable amateur work, selected, managed, staged, and drilled by the students themselves. The outdoor play each year is usually a Shakespeare drama, and the others are sometimes modern problem plays (Shaw or Ibsen), sometimes light society plays, sometimes old English plays, like "The Critic." The students of the first decade established the tradition for good plays, for "The Rivals," "She Stoops to Conquer," "The Taming of the Shrew" are typical of the plays given, and all of these have been repeated recently as history revolves.

Other customs, now inwoven in the fiber of the College life, were started in these first years,—boat rides on the Hudson, trips to Lake Mohonk, geological excursions, visits from the Hampton singers, the possession of a senior corridor and parlor, the giving of dances. History does indeed repeat itself, but with what

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changes? An alumna of the early days, watching now the joy of the senior dance on the spacious floor of the students' building, and the comfort of the supper served in the great gallery, must think of the dances of '73 so sadly described in the *Miscellany*.[1] "For three years have '73's sympathies been worked upon by the dejection of those unfortunate masculines who, once coming to a college entertainment in the anticipation of a grand, good time, and learning too late that the program limits them to listening to the literary exercises, and afterwards pacing through the corridors, like criminals taking exercise, thereafter 'regret' with profuse thanks."

It is no wonder that when dances proved such formalities, commencement exercises should have been awe-inspiring as the seniors in their white gloves presented to an amazed world essays on such subjects as "The Character and Influence of Socrates," "Divinity of Color," "The Philosophy of Herbert Spencer," or "Earnest Living." The papers of the day showed a patronizing attitude of amused tolerance towards the achievements of these educated young women and the possibilities of their future usefulness. The papers of the sixties might scoff at the feminine education in the new college on the Hudson; a "*lady*" principal might emphasize notes of decorum; across the front of the Main Building "Vassar *Female* College" might be carved in stone, but in the midst of all the proprieties and precautions, amidst the conventional and the formal social life, there was developing a real type of college woman who was to be to her young sisters of to-day the pioneer who made them possible.

Much more about the actual character of these early

[1] January, 1873.

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students comes out in their own publications than anywhere else, and from the first year of the College we have these students' records. At first an annual newspaper sheet appeared under varying names: *The Vassariana,* Vol. I, No. 1, June, 1866; *The Transcript,* June, 1867, and May, 1868; *The Vassar Transcript,* May, 1869, and May, 1870. In April, 1872, the first number of *The Vassar Miscellany* was published, which was a quarterly down to 1878, then a monthly, and to which in 1914 a weekly edition was added. The senior annual began as *The Hors d'Oeuvre* in 1888, but became *The Vassarion* in 1889. Just as *The Miscellany Weekly* to-day reflects part of the student discussion and opinion in the College, so nothing gives so vivid an idea of student life in the early days as the first papers and magazines which the students brought out.

The character of the contents is in itself noteworthy. There are few stories; the poems are mediocre; and the college songs are the same mixture of sentimentality and pathos which the songs of women's colleges, alas! still often tend to become, instead of rivaling "Lord Geoffrey Amherst," or "Fair Harvard" or "Old Nassau." The Vassar colors, rose and gray, were perhaps somewhat adapted to a style of poetry like this (air, "Auld Lang Syne"):

"Our morning dawneth on the hills,
A great and glorious day;
We take our colors from the east,
The Rose and Silver-Gray";

or this (to the air of "Red, White, and Blue"):

"Oh, bright be the years that are coming,
And bright be each day, as it goes,
Tho' gray be life's promise at dawning
'Twill deepen and blush into rose.

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We'll clasp hands for joy or for sorrow,
And sing as we speed on our way,
Take heart and be brave for life's morrow,
Gazing up to the Rose and the Gray."

The early publications contained few essays on political or social subjects (one in 1872 on "Our Obligations to France" being written by Professor Orton), but many on ethical and literary themes. Among the ethical subjects are "To Be or to Do," "Bores," "The Conservative," "Concerning Culture," "Right Reading." There are a few essays on travel in the shape of letters, from The Hague, from Florida, from Venice, but the majority of the essays are literary and the subjects natural ones for the times: "The Kindliness of Thackeray," "Lord Macaulay as a Literary Critic," "Charles Reade as a Novelist," "Dickens in His Works," "The Jew of Shakespeare, Scott, and Dickens," "Mrs. Browning."

A far better idea of the student life is to be gained from certain humorous articles full of local color, and from the editorials, critical articles, and news columns. The young women who talk so seriously about women's education, culture, harmony, might seem superwomen were it not for these lighter pages. The worst escapade on record of them is the famous visit of a few to a gypsy camp to have their fortunes told, an adventure which called forth one of Dr. Raymond's most scathing chapel talks. Compared with the exciting barrings out and riots at Princeton in the early days, the orderly life of these young women does seem decorous to an amazing extent, and a complete refutation of the fears expressed by Mr. Chambers and Miss Lyman.

Their worst indiscretions are fearless verbal daring. How under Miss Lyman's eye, *The First Epistle on Matthew* was ever published it is hard to tell, but the

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little pamphlet on file in the College archives and the advance sheets in the *Vassariana*, Vol. I, No. 1, show the courage of students who were no respecters of persons, nor yet of Holy Writ. The entire eighteen pages deserve reprinting, but the limit of space permits only quotation. Chapter I, verse 7, begins:

"7. Now it came to pass in the days of our Father Abraham, even while the land was sore distressed by reason of fierce fightings,

8. And famines and pestilences, and fearful sights,

9. Wars and rumors of wars: . . .

11. That unto Matthew (not the publican), the God of Sarah, of Rebecca, and Rachel appeared in a vision, saying Matthew, Matthew. And he said, Here am I. Speak, Lord,

12. And God said, Behold, I have heard the groaning of the daughters of Abraham, whom Ignorance keepeth in bondage, and I have remembered my covenant;

13. For they have altogether turned away from me to serve strange gods, even Extravagance and Idleness, and Fashion, which is the abomination of the Parisians; . . .

CHAPTER II

1. Now therefore, arise (for behold! I have set thee for a deliverer of my children), hearken diligently to the word which I shall tell thee, and according unto it, do so.

2. And Matthew did as the Lord instructed him; and he bought a parcel of a field of the children of Rip Van Winkle, which dwelt on either side of the river, even the River Hudson, . . .

5. And Matthew commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundations of the house."

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After the account of the completion of the house, begins Chapter III:

" He collecteth the seers, even the Band of Faculty.

1. And he gathered together of the excellent ones of the earth, the learned, and they that had great experience, to the temple which he had made;
2. John the Baptist (a forerunner of all who should come after him, in latter generations);
3. Of whom much mention has aforetime been made; yea, and now is, for among all the wise men who willingly offered themselves, none were found like unto him;
4. And moreover, because the preacher is wise, he still teacheth the maidens knowledge.
5. And Hannah had the supervision of the damsels; yea, of the whole house also; and she had the chief seat in the synagogue, and the uppermost room in the feasts."

After delightful descriptions of other members of the faculty, besides the president and Miss Lyman, verse eighteen continues:

" Now there was aside from the greater, a little temple, and Maria, daughter of one Mitchell, who also was an astrologer, and a monthly prognosticator, was priestess therein.

19. And lo, aforetime a star appeared in the East, and came and stood over the place where Maria was, and when she saw the star she rejoiced with exceeding great joy.
20. Now the wise men of the East saw the star also, but Maria saw it before they all . . .
26. And the same Maria was a prophetess and she prophesied, saying,
27. At such a time shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.

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28. And many believed on her, and they all saw through glasses darkly."

So in the style of the King James version the narrative continues through Chapter V, where "Matthew falleth sick; he recovereth; the damsels, and the wise men of the temple make a banquet upon his birthday," and Chapter VI, wherein "Huldah endeth her discourse"!

We wonder if the same light-hearted Huldah wrote the obituary in *The Vassar Transcript* of 1870 on "one of the oldest friends of the College, the white horse Billy," who "at the end of four years received the degree of A.B. (*animal bonum*)" and who was working when he died for his "A.M. (*animal magnificum*)." "*We* complain of being hard pressed," the paragraph goes on, "but who was ever driven more remorselessly than Billy?" "Henry Ward Beecher's highest wish for himself was Billy's final experience; 'he died in the harness.' The simple but expressive shaft erected to his memory symbolizes two things—the *position* he held as an official of the College, and his steadfast, firm, and upright stand thereat—a post."

Humor takes the form once of lively derision of the study of elocution, which is disturbing the peace of the campus.[1]

"Take a walk to Sunset Hill at almost any hour of the day and listen. Your ears will be saluted from all sides. From the valley resounds the challenge: 'Ho! Captain of the Moorish hold! *unbar* thy gate to me!' . . . From the other side comes the triumphant shout of 'Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!' while from the distance echoes the enthusiastic cry of 'Hurrah! *Hurrah* for Sheridan!' which the hills prolong in answering tones.

[1] *Vassar Transcript*, May, 1869.

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" The timid young lady seeks refuge behind the hill by the big chestnut trees, where she may test the strength of her voice to the utmost. First, she tries it in the low pitch; then she gradually rises to the highest; next, she calls aloud, hailing all sorts of imaginary beings; until she finally commands a whole army to ' Forward, the Light Brigade! ' and ' Charge for the guns! ' in such thundering tones as to provoke a startling response from the neighboring pasture. Behold! the whole herd of cattle, with heads half-raised, and horns directed as if ready for the charge, listening in mute astonishment to the strange command. . . .

" On the other side, we meet the fearless and unabashed; those who are bold to take all times and places for their practice. The walls of the gymnasium ring with the threatening announcement that ' The war is *inevitable*—and let it *come*—I *repeat* it, sir—*let it come!* ' "

Side by side with articles like these, full of genuine youthful humor, stand editorials and critical articles which show the deepest thought of the students of the sixties. The " editresses " of *The Vassariana* in 1868 (in the next year *The Transcript* has " editors "!) speak of the diffidence which they feel over coming before the world at all, but remark: " Nevertheless we believe that youth has a charm which all the strength and experience of age cannot outweigh. We know that without the toil of the pioneers the army never could advance, and the battle be won." In an article in 1869 on " The Conservation of Force " there is a keynote sentence which expresses much of the sense of responsibility which the thoughtful students felt. " Life and lifework seem now almost oppressively solemn," and this sense of responsibility as women college students finds voice in other editorial statements; in 1868,

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" From those who are watching our progress here, we ask:

> 'In that we have done nobly, striven at least,
> Deal with us nobly, women though we be
> And honor us with truth, if not with praise'";

in 1869, " Representing as we do, a community differing widely in religious and political beliefs, we cannot enter into discussions of either subject. Our object has been rather, to illustrate, in a measure, the inner life and thought of our College, but we have also striven to offer you something to please your taste. We trust that anxious eyes of friends may rest on something to encourage them and strengthen their faith in us; we hope that those who have little interest in our progress may find here, that which shall lead to inquiry and to sympathy "; in 1870, " We do not ask you to waive criticism and to deal charitably with us, because Vassar has turned over but a few pages of her history. We feel that those who love her in her infancy make up in earnestness what many of them have wanted in preparations for a college course."

The whole range of college life came under the observation of the students, and they were absolutely frank and outspoken in their criticism of it. Through the student publications from 1865 to 1875 are scattered criticisms of practical details in regard to the College management. If a college rule reads, " All valuables must be kept under lock and key," why then " we need locks on our closets," for our nearest locks are in our trunks down cellar, and although in the *Students' Manual* we read: " Valuables may at any time be deposited with the assistant treasurer for safe keeping," " he would find it rather troublesome, not to say im-

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possible, to have in hand all the possessions, small and great, which it is desirable to keep here 'under lock and key.'"[1]

In 1873 the students tried to inaugurate the plan of dancing in recreation hours, but "cold water was almost immediately thrown upon their hopes" (they affirmed) "in the shape of an announcement from the trustees that the floors were not strong enough to bear the jar thus imparted. Rather a significant comment on the general style of American building, and on that of the College in particular."[2] As the main building is still standing and for many years annual dances have occurred in its dining-hall and nightly dancing between dinner and chapel, it is to be feared that the alleged reason for the trustees' refusal was somewhat specious.

In 1875 a very severe arraignment of college management was made in a paragraph in the department entitled Home Matters, and the accuracy of the criticisms was borne out by President Raymond's contemporary reports to the trustees:

"We generally preface our complaints with the remark that Alma Mater is very kind to us, but——. What we groan over now is the gas, or rather the want of gas. The quality is good, it is only the insufficient quantity of which we complain. In the public rooms, the professors' houses, many of the recitation-rooms, and some of the students' study parlors, the gas is good, but in many of our parlors and in nearly all the bedrooms, it is miserable. A little flickering flame, by whose light one cannot read the coarsest print with any degree of comfort, is all there is, in most of our bedrooms. This is generally excused by saying that the parlors were

[1] *Vassar Miscellany*, November, 1872.
[2] *Ibid.*, January, 1873.

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made for studying and the bedrooms for sleeping. That is very well for the model student, who has so thoroughly disciplined her mind as to have it under perfect control, but the average girl cannot study to advantage in a room with others." [1]

The criticism goes on to show how the logical and actual result of this is trouble with the eyes for many students.

A much longer and more indignant criticism is aroused when the riding-school is given up and in direct address to the trustees ("O honored fathers"), the editors say:

"We are aware that heretofore the riding-school has not been a paying institution—has, on the contrary, been a sinking fund. . . . But can the College afford nothing which does not return it an income? Would our art gallery be abolished if it did not pay? An interest is slowly awakening among our placid and delicate American girls in outdoor exercise, a desire to emulate their English sisters in those physical accomplishments which give life and zest and courage for mental pursuits. The riding-school of Vassar has been no small encouragement to this end, and has given Vassar no small *éclat*, as being the only college or school possessing such an appendage." [2]

But the students of the first decade stop at nothing. They turn their searchlights on their own extra-curriculum activities,—now ridicule the Philalethean Society for subdividing itself into three chapters, "on the principle by which small boys divide a diminutive apple into three parts, to make more of it"; [3] now ex-

[1] *Vassar Miscellany*, April, 1875.
[2] *Ibid.*, January, 1873.
[3] *The Transcript*, June, 1867.

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press discontent with the limited powers of the students' association in complaints which to-day have a strangely familiar sound:

"One of the profoundest of educational problems is the question how to develop in students a proper self-reliance, independence, and ability to turn to good account the knowledge which they gain; how to give them strength to meet bravely the responsibilities and difficulties of mature life. That boarding-schools have failed to recognize this element in education is their great reproach." Here in college the student activities ought to give just this sort of training, but unfortunately "the Students' Association, the classes and societies, are regarded, in some degree, as objects of suspicion; their actions are watched, and even the programs of literary societies are subject to inspection and revision. If we could feel that this plan was for our good, we would submit without a word. But as we draw nearer to the earnest life which is before us the feeling grows upon us that we are not ready to meet it; that we need here, above all things, to become accustomed, in some measure, to self-guidance."[1]

The students offer suggestions also to the faculty about the curriculum and the educational side of college life. The need of endowment for a chair of history is ably argued, and complaint made that "the College barely recognizes history as a part of a liberal education."[2] Most intelligent discussion of principles to be used in planning a college curriculum and an individual course of study occurs in the pages of 1872.[3] An admirable plea is made in 1873 for longer library

[1] *Vassar Miscellany*, October, 1873.
[2] *Ibid.*, January, 1873, January, 1875. See discussion in Chapter IV.
[3] *Ibid.*, November, 1872.

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hours because of the educational benefit which would result.[1] The keenness of all these suggestions almost excuses the egoistic, patronizing tone that the young students occasionally adopt towards both trustees and faculty, as when in 1875 they remark:

"That Vassar has blemishes we all admit; no one sees the weak places in the constitution more clearly than we; but she is not ten years old yet—how can we expect her to be perfect? Let us charitably suppose that the faculty and trustees also have eyes, and the sense to use them; that they really do care as much as we for the well-being of the students, and then try to be patient,—after our share of the work is completed—until they can do their part."

In the same editorial, in thanking Professor Hinkel for giving the College some special lectures on history, the writer says:

"We give our heartiest thanks to Professor Hinkel for his willingness to undertake such a task; we are hardly surprised at it, for we have learned that no one is more ready than he to help us in our endeavors to make our study here more thorough."[2]

Much critical acumen is turned upon the courses of lectures offered at Vassar, both as regards their general character and their particular failures. In 1869 *The Vassar Transcript* reviews the lectures of the year, expressing great appreciation of the Lecture Fund left by the Founder, but hinting regret that while in former years the course has been marked out and the lecturers

[1] *Vassar Miscellany*, April, 1873.
[2] *Ibid.*, January, 1875.

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obtained by the Philalethean Society, this year the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees has done this work. The comments on two lectures in the course are, to say the least, frank. Professor Comfort, who came to lecture on " The Fine Arts," " was announced as a gentleman perfectly conversant with the subject, having studied it carefully, both in this country and Europe; but though we waited patiently through the lecture for some acquisition to the notebook with which, at his suggestion, we had come prepared, we heard nothing but a series of obvious classifications and commonplace definitions, unrelieved by illustration or discussion, unenlivened by learning or wit. Of the popular estimate of this lecture in the College, the most charitable expression will be silence.

" Next we were favored with a course of lectures on natural history, by Professor Ebell, assisted by a magic lantern! Here the English was neglected, the speaker evidently being in too great haste to stop for such trifles as plural subjects and singular predicates. The subjects treated of were made as clear as possible, perhaps, in the limited time into which the lecturer attempted to crowd such a multitude of details, and the illustrations were of considerable assistance! "

In 1870 *The Vassar Transcript* criticised the whole selection of lectures in the year, as most of them were " on educational subjects " and not " the wisest selection possible ":

" Shut in as we are from outside influences, we are too liable to fall into the error of thinking that the student's life is the only life, the student's interests the only important interests. . . . Unlike the students of other colleges, we have not the opportunity to come in daily contact with those engaged in active life, and thus learn

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what is going on. Absorbed in our regular college duties, we have no time to make a special study of these matters. Our lectures should be the means of meeting this want. . . . We should hear the popular speakers on the great vital questions of the age, that we may learn to judge correctly of the popular mind and intelligently form our own."

Another suggestion to the trustees seems hardly the sort that the *students* should have had to make:

"The maxim is indisputed that 'A man can't eat his cake and keep it too'; and the interpretation in our special case seems to be, 'We can't build new museums and have our usual course of lectures in the same year.' Our wise Founder inserted a clause in his will which gives, at the close of each year, the surplus money from the Lecture Fund for the improvement of the art gallery, cabinets, etc. The trustees, finding they were becoming involved, on account of the large expenditures which the new building necessitated, devised the cunning plan of suspending lectures for the present year, and so having a neat little sum of $——— with which to eke out their means. While the apparent artlessness of the scheme slightly amuses us, we can't honestly wax angry over it, though we do look back with longing eyes to the numerous stars which have brightened our sky in past seasons."[1]

The eagerness of the students for intellectual advantages, for discussion of the questions of the day, their sense of responsibility towards their own education and their reputation in the eyes of the world, all come out in certain, vivid articles relating to woman's sphere and education. A humorous paragraph appears first in 1867 in an article, "A Field for Action":[2]

[1] *Vassar Miscellany*, January, 1875.
[2] *The Transcript*, June, 1867.

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" One of the greatest questions of the day, and one as yet unsettled despite the universal agitations, is, What is woman's sphere? The noble-minded of the other sex invite her to compete with them for the honors of life's race; the ignoble and illiberal bid her remain forever bound by the shackles of all-powerful custom, the enemy of progress. Whether she shall enter the pulpit, mount the rostrum, exercise forensic or senatorial talent, compound patent medicines, edit a newspaper, speculate in government bonds, or N. Y. Central stock, or become the *model* woman, the ideal of old-fogydom, the incarnation of all domestic virtues, to whom the noise of the broom is sweeter than the scratch of the pen, and the dust raised thereby more delicately odorous than the musty pages of an Elzevir Horace—that is the question. Meantime, while the ' Lords of Creation ' are revolving these things in their minds and until Chapter Delta shall debate again upon this subject, what shall women in general, and women in particular, do for a minor sphere in which to shine until the proper place be assigned? "

The article ironically suggests work in the Floral Society!

More serious is a discussion in the *Transcript* of 1868 on " Advancement," in which the strides in the education of women are proudly reviewed. More attention, the writer points out, is being paid now to the physical education of women, for gymnasia have been established for them; " rowing, skating, and equestrianism are daily gaining the ascendency which they merit; in college life these seasons of relaxation from study are indispensable. Judging the whole world from the little world in which we live, we assert, boldly, that American women can undergo the same vigorous discipline that men receive. . . . Parents no longer think that

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daughters must complete their education at the age of eighteen; nor do the daughters themselves desire to make their *début* into society at the very age when they are best fitted to combat with the branches of a solid education. . . . Women now read the old masters, Horace, Tacitus, Thucydides, and Pindar; calculate eclipses; delineate those curious phenomena, the spots on the sun; verify the laws of chemistry by their own experiments; study physics theoretically and practically; in fine, women are drinking deep draughts from the overflowing fount of learning."

In another article in the same *Transcript*, "The Consummate Life," three lectures given at the College on "Woman's Rights" are discussed; one by Theodore Tilton, one by Dr. Holland, one by Anna Dickinson. The comments on the second show the spirit that was even then at work:

"Had we not long since made sufficient advancement in the intellectual life to decide that man is *not* our 'Author and Disposer' we might have been consumed by the devouring elements of Dr. Holland's eloquence. Happily he could not quiet our struggling ambitions by his laborious efforts to convince us that we are household angels. According to biblical teaching, man is 'lower than the angels,' but according to *his* interpretation, we, though angels, are a *little* lower than men. Our angelic spirits were sorely tried in hearing a dissertation on marriage, its function, its happiness, etc., instead of a successful reply to Tilton's broad idea of a sphere for woman. . . . Perhaps in audiences in Dr. Holland's native state, where there is one man to every four women, these sentiments might be well received, but to exhort 350 maidens to cling to their husbands, and guide the dear children, was mockery. The general effect of the lecture was to strengthen the

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work begun by Tilton, and to make us firm in our resolution to be independent and self-reliant as long as strength should be given."

The spirit that went into this criticism expressed itself in joy over George William Curtis's Founder's Day address in 1870:

"The opening of the address was a brief account of the founding of Oxford and other colleges which had been established for the education of men, and of our own Vassar as the first regularly endowed college for women. Mr. Curtis showed, that although this was a sign of promise, it was, even more one of shame to the ages which have gone before, just as the abolition movement was at the same time a glad premonition of slavery's downfall, and a burning disgrace to the civilization of the nineteenth century that arguments were necessary to secure its overthrow. The strongest part of his discourse was the overwhelming proof that woman's sphere is determined by the aspirations of her soul as well as man's by his, and bounded only by the limits of her ability to realize them. We could hardly believe, while Mr. Curtis was speaking, that anyone would take upon himself the responsibility of determining the sphere of any human being. . . . His words were an inspiration. They gave definiteness and strength to the views of very many among us."[1]

The type of the keen, intellectual, independent college woman who appears in these articles and editorials in *Vassariana*, *Transcript*, and *Miscellany* is individualized for us in *The Life of Ellen H. Richards*.[2] Her letters, written when she was Ellen Swallow, at Vassar, in the years 1868-70 show that she was one of

[1] *The Vassar Transcript*, May, 1870.
[2] By C. L. Hunt, pp. 36-79.

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the eager, able girls to whom the opening of the College meant a widened opportunity and a great hope. There is some chafing under the rules of the *Students' Manual,* along with admiration for Miss Lyman. Most ardent, intellectual ambition appears on page after page, an ambition which prompts the girl to save money from clothes towards the purchase of a telescope. Repeatedly pride is expressed in the nature and amount of the work done in Vassar College. "I think few men in college do as much as we do here," she comments. And a more personal pride appears in solid satisfaction over her ability to earn $1.50 a day for her own expenses, besides keeping up her regular work. Her letters are full of excitement over watching for meteors and observing stars with Miss Mitchell, over Professor Farrar's "deep thinking," over being promoted in German, and being allowed to tutor weak students in Latin. The girl is keen to criticise prosy lectures, long sermons, and factual examinations. Her letters show the intellectual student of the early days,—keen, eager, hard-working, above frivolities. It was of this sort of student and of the editors of the early College publications that President Raymond wrote in his Vienna report that the students themselves in the formative and unsettled period of the College "pleaded for adoption of the highest educational standard, avowed their readiness to submit themselves to the most rigid conditions, and exerted a powerful influence to diffuse right views among the more intelligent of their fellow-students." Ellen Swallow and her kind were not the "young ladies" for whom the *Students' Manual* was necessary; rather they were among the makers of Vassar College.

Matthew Vassar builded better than he knew. Neither the Founder, nor the president, nor the lady

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principal foresaw the kind of woman that was to be born with the new opportunity offered to women of a higher education. How absurd the timorous fears of Miss Lyman and the minute rules of the *Prospectus* seem in the face of the type of college woman who could sanely criticise her own student activities, the defects of her curriculum, her lack of opportunities in lectures for broadening her horizon, and the material equipment of the College! Of course, there were many very young students, especially in the unfortunate but necessary preparatory department, who were far from being Ellen Swallows, or Maria Dickinsons, and it is true the editors of a college paper are usually leaders in thought and radicalism; but still the type of Vassar's best was established in the first decade by women who felt themselves pioneers, who took their education seriously and demanded the best from the College for themselves, who, knowing that the eyes of the world were upon them, sought to maintain their honor, and who demanded of their College a chance to develop self-reliance in their own activities and to attain the highest education. Human and humorous, as fond of the social side of college life and its outdoor freedom and beauty as the students of to-day, they had a more serious attitude towards their responsibilities of education to the world and to themselves. Typical of the feeling with which they viewed their college course is the heading of *The Vassar Transcript,* reproduced at the end of this chapter. In the foreground Athena, goddess of wisdom (beside her, globe and telescope), takes by the hand a very young girl, a-flutter with eagerness, and points her to the College building, behind which is rising a great sun! And surely with the opening of the doors of Vassar College, there was seen the dawn of a larger

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freedom for women. That is the light which these pioneer college women of the sixties and the early seventies saw, and because they understood and expressed the meaning of the light, the student life at Vassar in the first decade was a time of great growth and aspiration and activity.

THE OPENING OF VASSAR

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VI

THE PERIOD OF DISCOURAGEMENT, 1878-85

Retrospect. Educational Equipment of Dr. Caldwell. Numbers Compared with Those of the New Colleges. The New Laboratory of Chemistry and Physics. The Call for Endowment. Growing Criticism from the Alumnæ of the Executive Management. The Formal Protest of Certain Boston Alumnæ to the Trustees. The Trustees' Answer to Alumnæ Criticisms. The Resignation of Dr. Caldwell. The Provisional President. The Election of the Rev. James M. Taylor.

PRESIDENT RAYMOND'S death in the summer vacation of 1878 was more than the removal of a great leader and teacher. He had organized the College, formed its curriculum, called its faculty, breathed his own high educational ideals into the new College, and through thirteen years of administration had led it from the chaotic educational conditions of the opening year to a stable, sound, educational policy, which gave it rank among the better American colleges. He and his confrères had made excellent use of the material equipment which they found provided for them,—buildings, art gallery, collections, the beginning of a library,—and the pioneer days of the enterprise had passed. Vassar was well-established early enough to share in the great advance of educational theory and practice that found expression in the colleges of 1870, but among the many who contributed to its progress then, no student of its records can doubt that President Raymond was easily first in progressive spirit, in foresightedness, in sanity, in the power to combine with high ideals the noblest

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means of making them real. Then, when only sixty-four, after thirteen years of incessant, exacting, and prodigious work, he died, when faculty and students were scattered, and the news bore its message of dismay and grief throughout the land.

It is well to glance for a moment at the great significance of these few years. Something more had been realized than Matthew Vassar had pictured to his widening fancy. A college had indeed been built and had performed its intended function of giving to girls the advantages hitherto reserved chiefly for boys. The work had been done on such a scale that it had become a challenge to an unbelieving world and a demonstration of the sanity of its own ideals and the vanity of the fears of society for the trained woman. Time enough had elapsed to prove the readiness of the college girl to meet all the older demands upon womankind, in home and church and school and social life, and her fitness as well for the new duties that had multiplied apace since women had learned during the Civil War, at the front and the rear of our armies, the power of organization and the possibility of rendering broader services to the world than had before been open to most of them. It has often been pointed out, as one of the synchronisms of history, that Vassar opened its doors in the year of the close of the great war, a response to such a demand on women for an intelligent service to society as civilization had never made in modern times. The College was indeed a symbol of a need and its answer,—not standing alone, but centering the forces of a generation into a conspicuous and influential result.

But those years meant much more. Before President Raymond died, two new colleges for women, of collegiate ideals and equipment, had begun their great history.

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A WINDOW BY THE CHAPEL ORGAN

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Vassar had more than blazed the way. For ten years before Smith and Wellesley opened their doors, for twenty before Bryn Mawr and twenty-five before Mt. Holyoke, it had first alone and then with its younger sisters fought the battle of the future. Occasionally, at a college celebration, one hears in the perhaps pardonable assumptions of such special times, a challenge of this claim. Vassar has been said to have failed of being a college because of its preparatory department, or because its curriculum was not the equal of the college of to-day, or because the boarding school survived in its social rules at a time when larger liberty would have cost the cause for which it stood much of the regard of the better portion of the social world. But it had already reared women who would take their places in the faculties of the new colleges when they were founded, and would win fame in literature and art, and leadership in the church and in every kind of social reform. It shows lack of historical perspective to judge the early college by the standards of to-day, but even so its record would justify its leadership. As men in America counted college work at that time, a true college had been created, and whatever changes might come in method or ideals, there had been no failure in that first faculty to insist on thoroughness, on high ideals, and on results. Vassar had met the jibes and sneers and ridicule that are reserved for pioneers; it had studied the problems of the education of a girl so that for a generation they called for no restudying; it had laid down lines of sane, broad, wholesome, symmetrical training to which, whatever the vagaries of a particular decade, the College would turn back as the needle to the North. Her younger sisters fought a less hard battle, and found an easier pathway, because of the

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pioneer work of the thirteen years of Dr. Raymond's service.

It was a sudden, wholly unexpected, responsibility which thrust itself on the trustees when Dr. Raymond died. It seemed to the board essential to have a president ready to open the College, and this was mid-August. On September 12th, the trustees met, having adjourned from August 16th, the day of Dr. Raymond's funeral. Several names were presented for the place, but Samuel L. Caldwell, D.D., of the Theological Institution at Newton, Massachusetts, was unanimously elected by a rising vote. He was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1820, and was, therefore, already fifty-eight years of age. He had graduated at Waterville College, now Colby University, and had had charge of two schools before he entered Newton as a student of theology. For twelve years he had served the Baptist Church in Bangor, and for fifteen the First Church of Providence, whose service he had left for a professorship of ecclesiastical history at Newton. He had occupied that chair for five years when he accepted the call to Vassar. He was regarded as a good scholar, a refined gentleman, a man who had won the respect of his fellows in a long and useful service.[1] It was not to be expected that the new president would at once command the loyal service that had been won by his predecessor,—but there are no indications, at first, of any disposition to limit the hearty and loving support which the College had generally received from its alumnæ.

The external relations of the College, it must be remembered, had been greatly modified by the opening of

[1] Biographical sketch in *Cities of Our Faith*, S. L. Caldwell, 1890.

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two colleges for women in Massachusetts. Smith College had declined to admit "preparatories" from the start and had reached an enumeration in 1879-80 of 202 students. Wellesley by that date had 375, of whom 214 were collegiate, and its preparatory department, closed to newcomers, had been reduced to 46, though its "specials" had increased from 44 to 115. The pressure of this friendly rivalry had been experienced at Vassar and had influenced its policies in the latter years of Dr. Raymond. In 1873-74 the College had 411 students, 239 of whom were in college classes. In 1875-76, the opening year of the Massachusetts colleges, the college classes fell to 183, out of a total registration of 370, and by Dr. Raymond's final year the collegiate students numbered only 177, out of a total of 347. Dr. Caldwell's opening year, therefore, with an enrollment of 306, and only 171 in the college classes, showed fewer collegiate students than either Smith or Wellesley. For some reason the older college, with fuller equipment and more experienced faculty, had not kept its hold and was failing, either in its methods, or aims, or standards, to appeal to the young women of the country as fully as the newer institutions. Nor was the lessening number to be laid wholly at the door of New England and the natural attraction to its own girls of its home colleges. The maximum of the New England students in the Vassar of those years was 95 in 1873-74, and it fell from that to 88 in 1874-75, to 72 in 1875-76, to 68 in 1876-77, to 65 in 1877-78, and in Dr. Caldwell's first year to 50.

The old College had probably grown more independent and possibly more exacting, and had made no special efforts to reach the growing schools. It was hampered in a measure by the need to keep its huge building full.

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Its charges were distinctly higher than those of its new rivals. It had not learned new methods of entering students on the diplomas of schools till the newer colleges had introduced them and won the schools. While it stood alone, these facts had no weight, but with other institutions bidding for students the effects were soon seen.

How much consideration these circumstances had had at Vassar in Dr. Raymond's final years it is now difficult to say. The faculty's action in allowing a carefully guarded reception of certificates from schools already tested by the examination of students, was passed in March, 1877, and is the first recognition of new conditions. This practice was more restricted, however, at Vassar than by its rivals, certainly as late as the latter eighties, when improved and stricter regulations made the certificate privilege generally more vital.

At the end of the first year of the new administration occurred a most encouraging event. Matthew Vassar, Jr., and John Guy Vassar, the Founder's nephews, agreed to build a Laboratory of Chemistry and Physics, a distinct advance in equipment, and a great step then for any college. Moreover, this was the first building offered the College since it was opened in 1865.

At the same time, as marking attention to internal conditions, the board asked the president to revise the published laws of the College, and further requested him to wear cap and gown at the commencement exercises, an innovation probably due to the taste and judgment of the president.

Meanwhile the faculty was examining educational conditions within the College, and asked the president to discourage special students under nineteen years, and itself applied carefully the rules as to certificates, cut-

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ting off careless schools, and accepting records of "reputable colleges" for precisely specified work. It was offering examinations, also, in Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago, and asking advice and co-operation from the alumnæ. It established further standards for graduate work for the Master's degree, insisted on a higher grade of work from individual students, and watched carefully the results of Regents' certificates.[1]

At the Commencement of 1881, the proposition to raise an endowment of $200,000 by such plans as the president of the College may deem to be the wisest for raising it, was passed by the trustees, who formally recognize the rivalry of other colleges and its naturalness, and insist that Vassar's standards must be inflexible. Evidently discussion had already begun over the falling popularity of the College, but till now the internal conditions were apparently thought sound and there seemed much ground for encouragement. In his report to the board this very year, however, the president is evidently already defending the College, for he protests that we "find our advantage in" the preparatory department. "We keep education for sale" and the faculty watches over it. As far as the decrease in numbers is concerned, the president claims that President Eliot had shown in his last report a tendency in New England to a diminution of men students in the colleges, and possibly the same was true of women. Moreover, college opportunities for women had increased.[2] He suggests as possible remedies increased

[1] Faculty Minutes, September, October, November, 1880; June, November, 1881.

[2] Just 100 students he claims was the total loss at Vassar in six years, and the decrease from New England was nearly half of that.

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advertising, increased charges to meet the financial demands, increase of scholarships. The board's answer, we have seen, was a proposition to the president to suggest plans for raising $200,000. That was a vital suggestion and the president answers it in his Report of 1882. The changes in the summer owing to the resignation of the lady principal and the physician, he says, had prevented any action outside of his academic duties, and later Matthew Vassar, Jr.'s, legacy, endowing two professorships and otherwise increasing the College funds, had brought new hope, and nothing had been done by himself. It is not too much to say that an important opportunity was thus lost, but no further reference to it occurs in the minutes of the board, nor in the reports of the president.

Meanwhile conditions that were so easily accepted at the College were arousing the attention of the alumnæ and compelling the question as to what could be done to stay the current adverse to their College. The report of the president just referred to is evidence of a widespread discussion, but in 1882 we find a direct and formal communication from a committee of Boston alumnæ to the president and faculty. Reference is made to severe criticism in public and private of apparent imperfections in the catalogue and curriculum, and the catalogue of 1881 is particularized. It is claimed that the course of study there described does injustice to what the College is actually doing in science and may mislead candidates for admission who compare catalogues. Courses in the classics seem narrow and fail to recognize current tendencies in education. The range of electives is too limited. What Vassar is actually doing should be more fairly shown. More opportunity for continuity in the senior year is called for, and an inter-

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calated system of hours is suggested. Loyalty, it is declared, has compelled this expression.

The faculty authorized the president to reply to this committee,[1] and a week later asked the heads of departments to furnish brief descriptions of courses of study for the catalogue. Changes were made also in entrance requirements, increasing that in plane geometry and adding botany.

Of far greater significance was the action of the faculty at a special meeting in January, 1883, considering the possibility of abolishing the preparatory department, whose continuance in the College had for a long time given grave concern to its best friends. Professor Backus contended from figures and facts that the preparatory school had not been essential to the existence of the College, that the criticisms of the friends and the popular prejudice from which the College was suffering were alike due to it, that its continuance involved increased expenditure, impaired the attractiveness of the College, damaged its repute, left it at disadvantage in comparison with other institutions,—and yet all efforts during five years to reduce the proportion of preparatory students had been unavailing. The faculty, therefore, appointed a committee to devise a plan for discontinuing the school, to advise regarding the financial strain involved thereby, and concerning modifications that its abolition would necessitate in the College organization. The committee's report, embodying all this, was sent to the Executive Committee for presentation to the board. At the January meeting, also, the faculty voted to ask the president to devise a system of visiting prominent schools, with a view to more friendly relations, and to report to the faculty

[1] February, 1882.

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any other methods besides personal visitation which commended themselves to him. One result of this was to increase the number of certificate schools, but the minutes indicate much care in the proceeding.

The board received this communication of such paramount and pressing importance regarding the preparatory department at the June meeting of 1883 and appointed a committee to report a year later. The president had referred to it in his report to the board and had urged serious attention to it and decisive action. If four professorships could be endowed, he thought, the school could be abolished,—but he deems it impossible for the president, with his duties of administration and instruction, to give more than incidental attention to this. Dependence must be on the "spontaneous donations" of trustees and other friends. Evidently the issue was now for the board, on which the president thus threw the responsibility. The chance for reorganization and reform seemed, officially, to depend on the development of leadership among the trustees and a clear view of the really critical condition into which the College was drifting.

Meanwhile the alumnæ had become alarmed by the decreasing popularity of the College and meetings had been called in New York in 1883 and February of 1884 for the purpose of arousing the authorities and the alumnæ to a realization of the dangerous drift of the institution. "Every member of the government," in the somewhat strained phrase of a subsequent circular, was invited to the February meeting, and twenty-two trustees acknowledged the invitation and three were present. Questions inquiring minutely into the conditions of the College had been sent to the trustees and faculty, and the president attempted to answer these at

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the meeting. A feeling that the method of procedure had not been wholly fitting led the association to decline the suggestion of its committee that the answers of the president be printed and sent to every alumna, and we have not been able to discover the purport of these answers. The meeting, however, had important bearing on Dr. Caldwell's resignation a year later. The inability of the association to agree with its committee, and some bitter personal controversy which ensued between its chairman and the president, in no way signified a disposition of leading alumnæ to accept the evidently decreasing influence of Vassar as necessary or tolerable. The occasional outbursts of feeling from individuals, even in the newspapers, which had the natural and unhappy result of misleading the public as to actual internal and educational conditions at the College,—and creating misrepresentations which required much effort to remove for several years afterward,—were offset by the steady, calm, determined efforts of the leaders to discover the sources of the trouble and to induce the trustees to see the need of some vital action.

The most important expression of this feeling reached the trustees, individually, in a letter sent in April, 1884, by ten members of the Boston Association, whose years of graduation ranged from 1869 to 1877. It is an able, earnest, and dignified statement, made after hesitation, they say, though the action of the New York alumnæ in February is evidence that others share their fears. They claim that Vassar can hold its place only through immediate action of its trustees. The steady decrease in numbers can no longer be explained by temporary conditions; either more students are necessary, or more endowments. Standards of work are lowered, they charge, by the conditions of entrance through the art

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schools to college classes. They have investigated the causes of the disfavor toward Vassar and find insufficient or unsustained the claims that the opening of the new colleges and their situation in New England, or the greater rate of expense at Vassar, or the claim of more rigid standards, account for the results. They are forced to believe that the executive management is the main cause of the decline. Signs are lacking of any constructive and progressive policy, of any efforts to widen the influence of the College or to increase its prosperity. Executive inefficiency is their answer to the question agitating the friends of the College. They have given facts to sustain this serious charge, but they add the most vital one,—a total neglect of work among the preparatory schools. While Smith and Wellesley are very active in this respect, Vassar is doing nothing to win their alliance and respect. The preparatory department has not been abolished, though it is persistently injuring the repute of the College. It is a complaint of one of the best New England schools which is preparing 145 students for college, and sends Vassar none, that the College will not take time to answer its questions, and the difficulty of getting information from Vassar is alleged in a paper circulated in New England as the reason of the brief reference to it. It would have been difficult for the alumnæ to mention a more telling fact than that. A vital, friendly relation to the preparatory school is essential to the well-being of a college.

This act of the drama culminated at the Commencement of 1884. Dr. Caldwell's report to the board refers to a communication signed by ten graduates, "all of them before my connection with the College," a copy of which was sent to each trustee, which "makes allegations in regard to the administration of the College for

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the last six years which in the main are untrue, unfriendly, and unjust." He does not feel called on to answer them personally, as he is not the appointee of the graduates, either individually or in their associations. He is, however, responsible to the board and invites its scrutiny. As far as the preparatory department is concerned, his opinion, and the faculty's, have been given to the board. This passage, at the close of the report, is annotated in pencil, " omitted," and it is uncertain whether or not it was read, or even stated, in substance, to the trustees, but it reveals the attitude of the president.

The board's statement, however, was explicit, directly as to the president and indirectly as to the agitation by the alumnæ. Mr. William Allen Butler offered the following resolution, which was seconded by Dr. Lossing:

" *Resolved,* That in accepting the report of the president this board recognizes the peculiar character of the work of the president and faculty of this College and the great responsibility which is devolved upon them. The board is satisfied that the work of instruction and the internal administration in every department of the College have during the past year been faithfully performed, and it expresses its entire confidence in the ability and fidelity of its president and in his devotion to the true interests of the College. On motion the resolution was adopted by an unanimous rising vote and it was ordered published in the ' newspapers and otherwise.' "[1]

At this same meeting the alumnæ sent to the trustees a communication as to the best means of establishing conference between the alumnæ and the board. The board appointed a committee to confer with the alumnæ, which reported that the alumnæ asked that the board

[1] Trustees' Minutes, June 10, 1884.

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designate one of its standing committees to receive its communications. The board approved of this and appointed the Executive Committee.[1] Communications were at once read to the board from a representative of the Boston Association and from the secretary of the association, asking attention to the communication sent by the ten alumnæ in April, and these were read and filed.

A special meeting of the board was called in January, 1885, to which twenty-two trustees responded. The chairman of the Executive Committee had died, several members were unable to attend its meetings, and it was necessary to act at once,—to fill up the board, and to reconstitute the committee. A notable event was the election now of Frederick F. Thompson of New York, as a trustee,—for this was the beginning of a personal interest which was to prove epoch-making for the College. A financial investigation of the College affairs was ordered, the Executive Committee reconstituted, and the president made a member of it.

A notable action, bearing on the controversy between the alumnæ and the administration, was now taken. Mr. Butler offered the following resolution, which on motion was unanimously adopted, and the secretary was instructed to communicate the same to the chairman of the Alumnæ Association:

"*Resolved*, That the Executive Committee be directed to address a communication to the Alumnæ Association prior to the 30th inst., stating that no communication having been made by the Alumnæ Association to the committee under the resolution of the Board of Trustees passed at the annual meeting in June last, the committee are desirous that the Alumnæ Association should at its

[1] Report of Alumnæ Association, June 10, 1884.—Printed.

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earliest convenience communicate to the Executive Committee in writing any matters which in the judgment of the Association may be material to the interests of the College."[1]

The response seems to have been immediate, and on the ninth of April, 1885, the Executive Committee which had received the communication in March, sent a reply, through Dr. Elmendorf, which answered the paper of the alumnæ in detail. After expressing sincere pleasure in the assurance of the undiminished loyalty and true devotion of the alumnæ, and its gratification at the high standards of college work maintained, it answers to the first request, that the trustees shall continue to keep in the board a large proportion of active business men, that the board has no rules as to qualifications and has to decide such matters on individual ballots. To the request that the board shall make an effort to discover the cause of the comparative diminution of Vassar's numbers and apply a remedy, it answers that the opportunities for women have increased, that other colleges offer more attractions to some parents, that the diminution is not due to the present administration, but was even more marked in the last four years of Dr. Raymond's, that the decline in numbers is less among the collegiate students than among the others, that the decline is in numbers only and not in the character of the work, as is seen in a summary of the increased facilities for work, that the published entrance requirements have been substantially enforced, and the faculty is conservative as to the acceptance of certificates, that the controlling cause for decrease of numbers is that Vassar is regarded as more expensive than other colleges. To the request that the spirit which has kept the college

[1] Minutes of a special meeting, January 14, 1885.

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work at a high standard be infused into the general management, and an aggressive policy be adopted embodying the best modern methods, and designed to impress the public mind with the advantages of Vassar, it answers that the trustees and faculty will accept the exhortation, but submits that the College is now spending $2,500 in advertising and issuing 5,500 catalogues, that the faculty is in communication with many preparatory schools, and that examinations are held annually in the principal Western cities. To the request that the trustees issue annually to the alumnæ a report which may be the standard source of information concerning the internal and financial conditions, it answers that the trustees get their information from reports of the treasurer, Executive Committee, and president, and that the committee of the association might consult these and even copy them. To the request that a formal response be made to each of their requests and to the action of the association in June of 1884, it answers that their direct requests have now been met, and that as to the action of June, 1884, the trustees had received the communication and placed it on file, and that as it had been in the hands of the board for two months it was probably deemed inexpedient to answer it, or it was not prepared to do so. "The burden of that letter was that 'the lack of executive efficiency' . . . is the main cause of the decline." It also intimates that the decline has been in scholarship, too, and hereby differs from "the formally expressed opinion of the Alumnæ Association." The committee then reiterates its statement as to the decline in Dr. Raymond's last years and assumes that the trustees would not wish to call to account that administration, "crowned with the respect and honor of the authorities," "even were it desired by the ten

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signers of this letter." That decline has been arrested, it is claimed. Further, the committee says, the board has passed the resolution already quoted.

It is fair, at this point, to note some of the facts on which the trustees based their formal opinion. That the College was losing its hold on the schools and that its numbers were decreasing was not open to question and was a matter of "solicitous consideration" by the board. They recognize the facts and that the decline antedates Dr. Caldwell's election.

Without any question, whatever the causes, there was a condition calling for sharp analysis, for urgent action, for vigorous measures by trustees and faculty, for earnest endeavor to secure favor and co-operation from the schools, for energetic personal action. The answer of the trustees seems insufficient. That a well-established institution with the advantage of priority, should decrease its attendance from 411, the year before Smith and Wellesley opened, to 275, in 1884-85, that its actual college students should drop from 239 to 144,—while its new rivals had grown from nothing to 296 and 515, indicated that there were other causes than those referred to by the Executive Committee. Yet these had greater weight than perhaps the petitioners allowed. Vassar was more expensive in the estimation of the public. Wellesley and Smith had set their rates lower,—and that factor was of enormous consequence for many years, even after Vassar was regaining its numbers and had re-established its influence. Those who recall the long-continued, strenuous financial pressure throughout the seventies will appreciate how large a bearing this had on the education of girls at college,—and Vassar was by far the greatest sufferer.

Moreover, the standards of Vassar, longer established,

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were probably more exactly adhered to. The writer felt assured, without conscious bias, in the first years of his administration, that the certificate privilege, then in vogue, was more loosely administered at the other colleges than by the very conservative and cautious faculty of Vassar. There were provisions made too for lower degrees, then, that Vassar did not recognize, and these swelled the total of "collegiates" when at Vassar they would have been "specials," just as also some of the "specials" at the other colleges would have been ranked as "preparatories" at the older college. Those times are far away, but these facts were then made the occasion of painstaking investigation and led to conclusions that the later change in policy at the other colleges did much to justify. But when this is said it is not a sufficient explanation, and the alumnæ were justified in insisting on the facts and a careful effort to improve conditions. There must have been laxness where entrance conditions could be modified for specials of all kinds, and where finances demanded a full building.

Certain facts, however, some of the alumnæ lost sight of, in their zeal, or did not emphasize in their writings and speech, with the result that, for years after, the public and the schools had a greatly exaggerated view of the degree and character of the decline at Vassar. The teaching was not poor, as so many had inferred,[1] and the general character of the college work was entirely worthy, as the composition of the faculty itself must have made evident, and as the results, seen in the graduates, and shown when the College began to prosper under the same faculty, amply proved. But there

[1] The "ten" of Boston had not attacked the teaching, but had confined their attention to executive management.

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was no energy in the relations of the College to the schools and the public. Money spent in newspaper advertising, enough to sustain a new chair, should never have been necessary, and was largely futile. What was needed was personal visitation of the schools, carrying Vassar to the principals and the public, convincing those who were growing unjustly skeptical as to its standards that it stood for the best. It had, indeed, a great deal to meet when two colleges started at once in New England. It needed force, new endowments, a reaching out to a new public instead of a reliance on its fine past, and the appeal of that to the educated,—and this was apparently lacking. There was much content at Vassar when, as the alumnæ saw, there was need of a holy discontent.

But the College was not moribund. The Executive Committee was well within the limits of fact when it called the attention of the alumnæ to the increased facilities of the College. Not only had there been no diminution in the teaching force, as it declared, but also a laboratory for physics and chemistry had been added and equipped, the laboratory of "Natural History," had been enlarged, the studio and the quarters of the music school increased, and the gymnasium greatly improved, and various minor gifts of importance had been reported. Each student now had a room to herself,—and it may be added, here, that in later years Maria Mitchell used to ascribe the beginning of the decline of the College to the crowding of the students into insufficient rooms,—and the infirmary had been enlarged. The table had been improved. The aid funds had been increased by $68,000, two professorships had been endowed, and a fund of $10,000 provided for ap-

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paratus in physics and chemistry. This was no mean record of progress in less than seven years, and the period antedated that of general liberality to our colleges. Moreover scarcely a benefactor of women's colleges had arisen, and this college had but about 600 alumnæ and no large constituency. It is not strange from this point of view that at the College itself there was some complacency, and a faith that with a little patience the numbers of students would increase without a lowering of the entrance conditions or the easing of the course of study. Moreover, it is an interesting testimony to the good spirit of the student body of that time, and to the abiding presence of those influences which make for scholarship, college friendships, and substantial loyalty to an institution, to find in the lists of the students of those years many who have gone on to fields of research and scholarship, many who have been leaders of the alumnæ, and in general a consistently loyal body of women who have illustrated as well as their sisters of more favored days the potency of their College to awaken ideals and to stimulate to best endeavor.

As for the chief blot on the reputation of the College as a college, the preparatory department, the president was right in saying that he and the faculty had laid that responsibility at the door of the trustees. Still the question persists,—should a president and faculty, clearly seeing the decreasing power of the College, and recognizing its causes, have been content to leave the matter there? Was it not a time for energetic action, for pressure on a board which met but once or twice a year, for recommendations as to method, for independent planning in its own sphere of responsibility, in

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relation to the schools, the curriculum, the public, and endowments? Either there was a lack of apprehension of the critical status of the College, or there was a lack of leadership. On the basis of a personal letter of Dr. Cooley, professor emeritus of physics,—stay and strength of three administrations,—it may be added, that though the faculty clearly recognized the declining prosperity of the College, and questioned as to its participation in the agitation of the alumnæ, no such action was taken because, as was expressed in a conference of the oldest and wisest members, though action was necessary, and appeals of the alumnæ seemed without influence on the board, yet the real trouble came from without and not from the inner life or actual work of the College. Its standards of graduation were being maintained, and the student life was seemingly healthful and undisturbed. Any concerted action against the president would necessarily produce ferment and perhaps disaster. With the alumnæ awake and the board now aroused, some action must soon come.

The reply of the Executive Committee to the Alumnæ was printed and circulated in the spring of 1885. The only event calling for special mention prior to the Commencement of that year, is the address prepared by the president arguing against the proposition to tax college property in the State. It is a strong and well-expressed statement addressed to the Senator and Assemblymen of the district.[1]

In his annual report to the board, June, 1885, the president refers to the excellent internal conditions of the College, the good spirit of the students, the healthfulness of their social activities and of the Christian

[1] Printed, and in the archives.

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Association, and their raising money for books for the library.[1] But neither in his report, nor in the report of the Committee on Faculty and Studies, is there any allusion to his purpose to resign. Yet, at that meeting, after the presentation of the reports, the president read a brief letter resigning his office from the end of the current academic year.[2] The trustees accepted it with expressions of deep regret, of a "profound sense of the patience and faithfulness," which had characterized his discharge of the duties of his office, and of their own personal affection and esteem for his character. They asked him also to act as president till his successor should be appointed. In accordance with this request, the president continued his services through the summer vacation.[3]

The lack in the president's letter of any word of regret, friendship, or hope for the future of the College

[1] Part of the mismanagement that might have been commented on, was the prevention of the use of the library fund of the Founder for its legitimate uses, and the saving it, as under certain contingencies was possible, for "repairs and improvements."

[2] June 9, 1885.

To the Trustees:

For some time, I may say a long time, it has been my purpose to close my connection with the college at the end of the current academic year. I take this opportunity to inform you of the fact and to offer my resignation of the office of President and of Trustee at that date.

Very truly yours,
S. L. CALDWELL.

[3] Dr. Strong says the resignation was sudden and unexpected, prompted by unanticipated information that Dr. Bright and others had reached the conclusion that a change was needed to save the college. Dr. Caldwell had sought the opinions of his trustees, but had not been asked to resign. On the other hand several of the trustees, such as Drs. Robinson, Kendrick, Lathrop, knew all about the steps which led to the Boston letter and must

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is impressive and in contrast to the expression of the trustees.

Possibly words were spoken, but not an indication of it remains in the minutes to show it and there is no further reference to the subject by trustees, faculty, or Executive Committee. Committees were at once appointed to consider a possible reduction of the teaching force and redistribution of salaries, and the reorganization of the entire work of the College. Dr. Strong took occasion to address the board on the opportunities and needs of the College, and was thanked by a rising vote. Thus closed an administration of seven years, during which the College had received important endowments, many lesser gifts, and the first building erected since the Founder's death. Its faculty had labored to maintain its standards in the face of declining numbers and income, and had looked carefully to the internal life and development of the College. It had, however, lost its hold on the public as compared with its rival colleges, and there was no forth-putting

have been looking for the resignation. They were convinced of its necessity, in the circumstances.

The Vassar Miscellany, July, 1885, has the following notice of the resignation:

"'The Rev. Dr. Samuel L. Caldwell, for the last seven years president of Vassar College, has resigned. The foremost girls' college of the United States will have much difficulty in finding a president as scholarly, refined, and unselfish as Dr. Caldwell, who has very many friends and admirers throughout New England.' We clip the above from a Boston paper and print it with our warmest endorsement."

In this number is also printed a report of the alumnæ meeting and the Executive Committee's reply to the alumnæ, signed J. Elmendorf,—and an account of the numbers signing, and not signing, the petition presented by Catherine Gerrish, as president, for alumnæ representation. The movement was a very strong one, but the demand was not universal. The subject was necessarily postponed in the pressure of business caused by Dr. Caldwell's resignation.

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activity in relation to the schools or to those who could help endow the College. Dr. Caldwell was constitutionally unfitted for this kind of work. He was a man of modest, diffident spirit, of scholarly habits, accustomed to the pen, to deliberative bodies, to the careful weighing of questions, rather than to the executive realization of ends decided on. He was genial among friends, refined in his tastes and language, a gentleman by birth, training, and disposition, desiring the best for his parishioners and his students, and aiming to give them the best he had, but not an effective teacher of young women. In another period and place his qualities might have shone in the chair of a college executive, but they were not adapted to meet the exigencies of a college that demanded aggressive courage to stay its decline, to relieve it of the incubus of the preparatory department, and to urge its needs on the minds of an uninterested public. Dr. Caldwell lived after his retirement for nearly five years in the city of Providence, a factor in its best society and its scholarly interests. Once he returned to Vassar to preach to the College, with every appearance of most cordial interest in its welfare and gratification in its progress.

The trustees appointed a committee on nomination of a president at once, and within ten days it was ready with a report. As was natural in the conditions which had developed, there were divisions of opinion among the trustees and a desire on the part of some alumnæ to canvass the ground more fully. An adjournment was taken to September, and the meeting then only served to intensify the divided interests of all concerned. Meetings of the board were called from time to time, and finally it united in the choice of Dr. Samuel W. Duncan of Rochester, N. Y., but he declined the election.

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After further months of seeking, on April 6, 1886, the choice fell upon the Reverend James M. Taylor of Providence, R. I., and he was inaugurated in connection with the exercises of the Commencement of 1886.

Meanwhile the board had requested one of its members, J. Ryland Kendrick, D.D., then residing in Poughkeepsie, a scholarly and charming clergyman, to act as "provisional president" till the position should be filled. Perhaps no one without experience of the various conflicting forces in the faculty, the business management, the trustees, the alumnæ, which had been developed in these years of criticism and dispute, can appreciate all that Dr. Kendrick and his gracious wife succeeded in doing in a single year of residence in the College building. It was not expected that any new projects should be advanced, or new work initiated, though careful management reduced the College debt, but the wisdom and tact of Dr. and Mrs. Kendrick and their generous giving of themselves to the needs of the College, changed its atmosphere, brought in a better and more genial spirit, relieved the strain under which the College had suffered, and prepared the way for a better day.

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VII

THE PERIOD OF EXPANSION, 1886-1914

Administrative Organization. Educational Development. The Material Problem. College Life. Relation of the College to Problems of the Day. Alumnæ Organization. Results.

Administrative Organization

Notwithstanding the admirable and pacific influences of the year of interregnum, no new initiative was immediately possible and no radical readjustments. Yet there was a call for a new attitude, for the problem set before the College had assumed new and large proportions. Whether justified or not, the feeling had extended through many of the preparatory schools that the standards of the College were not maintained. Its continuance of a preparatory department seemed to them not only a suggestion of that, but in direct rivalry also with the preparatory schools and that was resented by them. The popular mind, moreover, had been disturbed by the agitation of these years and distrust had grown up, however unjustly, in many quarters. The alumnæ were awake and waiting to help any forward movement that might be suggested, and even then were raising funds for a new gymnasium. Endowments were greatly needed, an extension of facilities for residence and for academic work had become urgent, and new departments of study were demanded as well as fresh equipment of those established.

It was evident that the College administration must be put into close and friendly relations with the alumnæ,

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first of all, that the schools should be visited and convinced of the soundness of the college work, that the curriculum should be improved, endowments obtained, a larger constituency created, new buildings erected, and a general conviction be produced of intellectual vigor and progress.

Toward this result Vassar had a faculty thorough and honest, traditions already established which pledged trustees, faculty, and alumnæ to intolerance of any conditions but the best, social aims which appealed to the homes of the land, general soundness in its ideals of physical, intellectual, and spiritual training, and a loyal and steadfast body of alumnæ. Yet, notwithstanding its twenty-one years of pioneer service, it had no large constituency and confronted a society not yet soundly convinced of the desirability or worth of colleges or college education for young women. In these conditions the College now addressed itself to its new problems.

A natural result of the events sketched in the last chapter was the development of friction in the machinery of administration, with consequent lack of unity and occasional conflicts of authority. There was no rupture of pleasant relations of president and faculty. There was no lack of harmony between the president and lady principal, but there had been a tendency to leave to the latter responsibilities that were thought to belong to the former. The president was a member of the Executive Committee, but its chairman with all his responsibility was a resident of New York,—and this type of organization had earlier been a source of great irritation and even productive of grave results. The superintendent was secretary of the Executive Committee, familiar with all legislation, educational as

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well as business, and thereby thrust often into academic positions, such as the marshalship of Commencement, which aroused protests from alumnæ and faculty. The condition was not deliberately created, but into it the administrative relations had drifted.

The effect, when a new administration was inaugurated, was to arouse the trustees to drastic action. By resolution the president was made chairman of the Executive Committee, was created the unappealable authority in all internal concerns of the College, and was directed to appoint an alumna annually as commencement marshal. Thus all responsibilities were centered in his hands and he was held rigidly accountable to the board. These facts are of especial interest in view of the discussions of to-day regarding the presidential office and its excessive influence in our American scheme. Although these supreme powers were never invoked, and although the present trustees may be unaware of the action of 1886, it is worthy of note that at the time the conviction was dominant that nothing but unity in the administration could restore the College to full efficiency. Practically, the chief result was to arm the president with power in case of serious friction, or of lack of unity in the workings of a complex business. It must be remembered that the present challenge of the College president as such was then unanticipated.

A word should be said at the outset regarding the trustees. It is quite the fashion to ignore their place and great service in the American college. Like presidents, faculties, and alumnæ associations, they are not always wise and efficient, and the academic body is prone to regard their work as unessential. At Vassar, through all these years of prosperity and progress every advance has had behind it the sympathy and encour-

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agement of the board. The Executive Committee, in particular, the real Executive of the College, has given the time of busy men, often of large and exacting interests, in its monthly meeting of counsel and direction. The Committee on Faculty and Studies has watched actively and efficiently the appointments and the services of the faculty; the committee on grounds has planned and labored for the successful development of the campus; and those dealing with the finances have so managed that in thirty years not a dollar has been lost and unfortunate investments of an earlier day have been made good.

Wise business forethought, financial skill, practical sense which is sometimes needed to balance academic visions, gifts of money and buildings, courage in facing the risks of progress, constant personal sacrifices in a business whose sole reward is the consciousness of good service, make up a record deserving gratitude from alumnæ and faculty, and one no more to be omitted in the history of a college than the academic labors which rest on them.

The trustees at once also established satisfactory relations with the alumnæ. The agitation for representation began with the first meeting of the alumnæ in 1871, when only five classes had been graduated. In the last year of Dr. Caldwell's presidency the whole association was canvassed and a huge petition was sent to the board asking for membership in that body. This petition had been carefully drawn and submitted to every member of the association, with the understanding that it would be presented if a majority signed it. There was opposition, some wishing to change the language of the petition, some claiming that the alumnæ should wait to be asked,—but the great majority signed and the petition

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came to the board for its decision.[1] Action was delayed, owing to the engrossment of the board with the sudden change in the presidency, but as soon as possible the matter received full attention. Certain legal questions as to method needed settlement, and the practice of the few institutions having such representation was inquired into. It was at last determined that the danger of infringing the charter could be avoided if the board regularly elected the nominees of the alumnæ to life-membership, they in turn to resign to the board and alumnæ at such dates as the alumnæ might settle. Thus their tenure from the board's point of view is precisely that of other members. Favorable action, after full discussion, was taken by the trustees in June, 1887, and three alumnæ became members of the board. The plan has worked excellently and the alumnæ trustees have been among the most useful and influential of the body.

The executive departments were at first maintained by a small force, though students of all grades numbered nearly three hundred and the faculty over thirty. The president had one secretary, who attended to educational details, held many interviews, and wrote a part of his correspondence. There was no other assistance. The lady principal had charge of all social matters and absences from classes were all reported to her. She had no assistant. The superintendent carried on the business of the various departments, repairs, engineer's, farm, garden, housekeeping, without a clerk. The treasurer had no assistance with the books, save what he

[1] *Vassar Miscellany*, July, 1887. This petition was drawn up by Andrew Jackson Poppleton of Omaha, General Attorney of the Union Pacific, whose daughter was on the committee and presented the papers to the board. Letter from Ellen E. Poppleton Shannon.

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gained from the clerk who attended to the stationery store, the mail, and the telephone. In the vacation the mail was sent to the president at his summer home and was answered by his own hand. The faculty consisted, for legislative purposes, of the president, all full professors (there were eight), the physician, the lady principal, and no others attended the meetings. It was a great boon, or so regarded then, when the board, in 1887, voted that instructors should attend faculty meetings, with right to discuss all questions, but without vote. Questions of every nature pertaining to the College were debated in the meetings,—and even the catalogue, before the annual publication, was looked over in solemn conclave, page by page. Every academic petition was considered, and there were no standing committees. As the faculty grew larger and increased numbers of students brought more business, the meetings became wearisome in detail and cumbrous in action, till the old methods broke down by their own weight and the faculty was compelled to delegate business to its committees and to the president's office.

As early as 1897, the president discussed, in his annual report, the relation of the faculty to the executive office and to the trustees. There was no note of friction involved, and no complaint had arisen, beyond the frequent objections to the wearisome details involved in the discussion of routine matters in the meetings, but the desire was to define the limits of executive and legislative functions in view of the problems the growing College was sure to bring. The avowed aim was to save the faculty from the drudgery of administrative routine and from the wear of details, that so time might be saved for study and scholarship,—and to secure efficiency and promptness in action which are generally

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lacking in the procedure of large bodies. It seemed better, the report suggested, to employ clerks rather than use the highly-trained professors for detailed administrative work. Attention was called, too, to the growing complaints from the faculties of the country regarding the great encroachment on their time by the demands of non-professional work on committees and in other directions of service. This runs counter to much recent discussion, but if division of labor secures larger results, the principle urged then will again receive fuller attention than our later literature is giving it. Again in 1903, and still later, in 1911, this issue is discussed in the reports of the president. Though opinions regarding it may have varied in the faculty there had been no open discussion or reference to it, but the president's purpose was to define jurisdictions while all was harmonious, his own opinion being that the faculty's sphere of legislation should be confined to strictly educational matters. As formerly, so now, this was urged in the interest of the scholarship of the faculty.

At the date last named it was suggested that certain questions bearing on the permanent policies of the College, regarding both government and instruction, should be submitted to the trustees before final adoption. This was in accord with provisions in the statutes of our leading colleges. The subjects suggested were certain proposed radical changes in the curriculum, conditions of admission, the method of observing Commencement, change in the normal length of residence for degrees, new degrees, changes likely to involve considerable new expense. This suggestion was adopted by the trustees at the end of the following year.[1]

[1] *Report* of 1911, p. 13.

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The executive offices were necessarily modified as the College grew. The president's secretary became secretary of the College, with her own office and assistants, the lady principal had assistants, who served as heads of houses, the business and financial offices increased their clerical force, but the development was merely a growth and the organization was not yet developed into a new organism.

As early as 1901 a plan was suggested for the social organization of the College, which was more than realized in the legislation of 1913.[1] By action of the trustees in that year the lady principalship gave way to a head warden and wardens, with the duties and responsibilities of the older office, constituting a committee of which the head warden was chairman. The duties formerly centering in a single office were divided according to residence halls, unity of action being secured by conference of the committee. The duties and influence which had gone far beyond the endurance or power of any individual could in this way be maintained and the inestimable value of the older office in shaping the social ideals of the College continued. With a view to further perfecting the form of the new administration, the secretaryship, a term nowhere used to designate the duties performed by this office, which were substantially those of a dean, was constituted a deanship, the nature of the work remaining what it had been for many years.[2]

The great business of the College was also now reduced to better form. The manager of all departments was made treasurer with responsibility to the Executive Committee and in its absence to the president, and under him was appointed a superintendent, who was at once

[1] *Report*, 1901, p. 7, also 1905, p. 15, at end.
[2] See Appendix III.

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buyer for the College of all its enormous supplies, and direct head, with report to the treasurer, of the various business departments. An assistant treasurer had control of the business of the financial office. A director of halls of residence was supervisor of the work of the housekeepers, and reported to the superintendent.

After the announcement of the president's resignation, in February, 1913, dissatisfaction with this most recent legislation regarding organization found expression in a petition to the trustees from a part of the faculty who claimed that this latter legislation showed a tendency to ignore the faculty in educational details and asked " power of consultation and advice in educational matters that come up before the board." The board had regarded this whole plan of reorganization as within the province always filled by it throughout the history of the College, and had expressly stated that the scheme was not one of new powers, but a readaptation and renaming of old offices, all the suggestions for which had been published from time to time in the president's reports without drawing out any adverse comment.

The petition was presented to the board through the president of the College in June, 1913, and consideration of it was promised at the next meeting. In June, 1914, the board received another communication announcing the appointment of a committee of three by the faculty to confer with the trustees, and the board voted that the Executive Committee should be the means of communication between the faculty and trustees " while the College is without a president." [1]

One more fact deserves record in connection with the history of the executive work. In 1903 the provision of

[1] Minutes of the board, June, 1913, June, 1914.

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a pension system was urged on the board. By 1906 it was decided to limit the service of professors to seventy years of age, the board being at liberty to retire them at sixty-five. A method of pensions was still under consideration when the College was placed on the Carnegie Foundation. In 1912 the president again recommended consideration of a pension fund for such members of the faculty as have served the College twenty-five or thirty years, and are ineligible under the rules of the Carnegie Foundation. This matter is still pending before the trustees.

In February of 1913, the president read to the trustees a letter tendering his resignation, to take effect in the following summer, if deemed possible by the trustees, but in any case not later than February 1, 1914.[1] With the conviction that he could not give most efficient service for more than a few years in any case, and at an age which he had uniformly urged as advanced enough to justify a review in every instance of a professor's qualification for further service, and in view of the approaching fiftieth anniversary the conduct of which, and the advantages of which, might better fall into the hands of a younger successor, he was led to insist upon the acceptance of his resignation against the request of the board for its withdrawal. By its wish he continued his service till the later date set, and left the College February 1, 1914.

The committee of the trustees on the nomination of his successor, after careful search, reported to the trustees, January, 1915, the nomination of Henry Noble MacCracken, Doctor of Philosophy and Professor of Englisn in Smith College. He was unanimously elected and entered upon his duties February 1, 1915.

[1] See Appendix III.

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Educational Development

In every educational corporation the complex demands of the material equipment and the business administration are sure to press hard upon the attention of all concerned. Vassar has had a very great material growth in the past thirty years, but the paramount interest was educational, and the material growth was urged only as a response to the higher needs of the College.[1]

A beginning was made at the first faculty meeting of 1886-87, when a motion was introduced for the consideration of a new curriculum. The criticisms urged earlier by the alumnæ will be recalled, and the demand for changes was insistent. Their nature, however, was the vexed question. The time was marked by an upheaval of all the old theories. Harvard had set the example of a very free elective course, and many institutions whose students were not prepared up to its standards and who were not equipped for its work followed its example with even less restraint. Free election, a group system,—a modification of the old rigid curriculum, combining restraint with new freedom,—had their devotees who filled the journals with discussions and divided every educational meeting. Vassar's faculty was conservative, and convinced that the American student of that day needed much required work as a preparation for free election. At its regular meetings and at special evening meetings the faculty debated the issues at stake and prepared a course of study which emphasized the need of continuity in studies, opened electives in a small degree in the latter half of the sopho-

[1] See *Report* of 1889, on the use of the J. G. Vassar fund, and *Report* of 1901, at the end.

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more year, and made the last two years almost wholly elective. A course in history was planned with hope for a new chair the following year,—the only history course that year being offered by the president, who also had the work in philosophy and ethics. This curriculum, in its substantial lines, greatly improved by the establishment of the department of history and by the enlargement of many other courses, lasted till 1895-96, when the faculty introduced electives in the first term of the sophomore year. A change was also made very early in the method of Bible study, which had been conducted Sunday mornings by various instructors. Now many general lectures were added, and soon a system of courses by non-resident lecturers was introduced. President Harper, then professor at Yale, Professor E. D. Burton, then of Newton, Professor Riggs of Auburn, Vincent of Union, Burnham of Colgate, Pattison of Rochester, were among the instructors. Not till 1902 was the way open for recommending the establishment of a chair.[1]

Very important was the stimulus now given to the library by a vote of the trustees. The Founder's fund was so left that unless it was used by December 31, of any year, it could be converted into the fund for repairs and improvements. The treasurer in the earlier period was unconvinced of the need of a large collection of books, and the fund was so successfully diverted from the library that its growth was very slow. Now, on motion of Mr. Swan, whose fidelity to the Founder's wishes was always marked, the fund was regularly appropriated for books and the treasurer forbidden to use it in any other way. When 573 books were added in a single year the inspiration and promise were very great

[1] *President's Report*, 1902.

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to those who had been longing for the means of fuller intellectual life. That shows a day of small things, but it was an open vision of a better day. Art exhibitions were also begun in the corridors of the Main Building where the members of the College lived, photographs of the great paintings arranged by schools, a recognition of a need deeply felt but which the College was then too poor to provide for adequately. The faculty also introduced now a general examination week, taking from its members the large liberty of arranging their own times in connection with the classwork of the final week of the term, and providing for unity and a common system.

At the end of the first year of his work the president's report urged two special recommendations of great consequence and suggested that " we must strike boldly, or lose our lead." One was the immediate founding of a chair of history. Of even greater importance was the recommendation that the preparatory department be abolished. This latter proposal seems now of small import and excites only wonder at the interest it aroused. Then it was revolutionary in Vassar's life. The history of the efforts to abolish the preparatory department have been sufficiently detailed in a preceding chapter. The president and faculty had urged it; the alumnæ had demanded it,—and all in vain. The faculty had coped with the situation as best it could, and had so guarded the approaches from the preparatory department to the college classes that its influence on intellectual standards was reduced to a minimum. But it hurt the influence of the College with the public, it estranged the sympathies of rival preparatory schools, and it was a source of weakness in the social life and influence of the institution. What so long

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prevented its abolition? Supposed financial needs. There was abundant room in the great building for the fifty students, and the income from them was a very important consideration. The board made this clear to the alumnæ, and it had even been suggested that an endowment be raised to make good the sum that would be lost by the proposed action.

To the president the history of two years, his first year and the year of Dr. Kendrick's service, seemed to demonstrate that with careful economy, and with the hope of a moderate increase in regular students, the financial problem might be met if the College closed the preparatory department at once, but carried on the promised courses of those already entered. The board adopted this suggestion in June of 1887, and in June of 1888 the department was closed. It was a year of anxious care, however, and a trial of faith, for the increase of students did not come at once. But the year closed without debt, and a crucial step forward was won.[1]

Other problems, closely related to this, at once appeared. Special students in music and art could, where necessary, take studies with the preparatory class, and the term "special" had come to denote a very great variety of intellectual equipment. The action taken, therefore, raised standards for all special students. In 1886-87 the catalogue showed one hundred and sixty-two students in college classes, forty-three "specials," sixty-three in music and art, forty-three preparatories. Though the next catalogue showed a loss of eighteen, there were seven more in college classes, and in face of the grave financial problem, requirements were raised and more strictly enforced. As a result, special students

[1] *Reports* of June, 1887, MS., and 1913, p. 14.

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gradually disappeared. This process was hastened by a crucial decision of the board in 1892.

Up to this date the schools of music and art were under special heads, responsible to the president, but without relation to the faculty of the College. Diplomas were given by these schools to such as completed their courses in theory and practice. Vassar made no allowance for either in estimating hours counting toward its A.B. degree, though at Wellesley and Smith allowance was made for even the practical portion of both the arts. As happens, wherever such "schools" exist, numbers of students entered them who were not of college grade and swelled the numbers in the catalogue and the funds in the treasury.

Dr. Ritter, the distinguished professor of music, died suddenly, abroad, in the summer of 1891, and the problem of the "school" was thrust upon the administration. In a special report, printed and sent to the trustees, the president urged that college professorships of the arts be at once established, abolishing the "schools"; that instruction be offered in the theory of the arts as part of the College curriculum, and that practice be provided for, though not as belonging to the College course; that diplomas be no longer offered, and that the standards of admission required of all "specials" be the same as those enforced for entrance to the freshman class. There were then fifty students in art and music, forty-one "specials,"—three hundred and seven in college classes. The trustees adopted the recommendation at once, and a second great step was taken toward making Vassar a homogeneous college of liberal learning. The action justified itself in every respect.

Once more, in 1899, the faculty undertook a radical reform of the curriculum. The effort resulted in sharp

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divisions and discussions on every point involved,—continuity, variety, thoroughness, breadth, and the fitness of specific studies and combinations of study to secure the desired results. Not till the fall of 1903 was the curriculum put into practice which has lasted in its general provisions until now. Like all college curricula, perhaps, which are made by a large body of college departments, this was a compromise, absolutely satisfying no one and yet offering excellent opportunities for all who were trained under it. It was a decided advance on what had preceded it. Compulsory mathematics was retained by a small majority. Two languages were continued during the first year. A year of science, a year of history, and a year of English were enforced; philosophy, or psychology, and ethics were retained as obligatory; and better provision made for the third language compelled for entrance. There was full discussion of a free elective system, and of a group system, but wiser than the excessive liberty of the one, or the often excessive limitations of the other, seemed a system which promised a broad foundation of general study and liberty beyond that, limited by certain concatenations of studies, by permission of professors, and by general faculty oversight. The faculty held to the view decidedly, that the aim of the College was to furnish that general training which has proved itself in the history of education the best basis for further study and scholarship, and the most resourceful discipline for the general life.

It was a natural feature of the history of education in this chaotic period of the eighties and nineties, which appeared in the effort of most of our small colleges to offer university as well as college work. Everywhere the new university spirit was spreading and with dire

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results, educationally and financially, to many of the smaller institutions. Vassar, like the rest, offered graduate study in several of its departments, of a thoroughly good and useful nature. But now the question arose as to the desirability of continuing this double aim, and the influence of this on the undergraduate work which must be the chief business of a college. The board appointed a committee of investigation to correspond with leaders in education and to learn the results of the practice at other colleges. The report showed that the consensus of opinion favored the view that the better work would be done for the undergraduate where his or her interests were paramount, that greater singleness of aim would be encouraged, that the best interests of education in the country certainly did not demand that every college should aspire to be a university, and that Vassar would do well to declare itself for an independent policy and sphere. The board adopted the report, withdrew the offer of courses leading to the Ph.D. degree (1894), and deliberately declared Vassar an undergraduate college. It pledged itself also to do its utmost to encourage graduate work elsewhere. Fellowships were sought and gained, until in 1914 the College offered ten for graduate study.

Perhaps with pardonable inconsistency the College continued for several years the grant of scholarships to recent graduates for one year of work at Vassar. Many were thus encouraged to go on to higher study in the universities. The results of this policy have amply justified it. A considerable number of graduates of Vassar is to be found yearly at various institutions, working for the degree of master of arts or doctor of philosophy, and many have been recipients of scholarships and fellowships from other colleges. One of the interest-

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ing events of Commencement is the announcement of the names of those thus honored.[1]

The rapid growth of numbers after the College had settled its plan and policy raised fresh problems. The count of students doubled in the first six years of this period, and the question of accommodations was always pressing. This brought to serious discussion the advantages and disadvantages of large numbers. The president had been convinced in 1904 that the question was vitally one of good organization, but as early as 1894 he had told the board that if any way could be found to secure the best five hundred students that number would be ideal, but that the thought was "an idle dream." Now, however, the problems became so vexatious,—of finance, of material expansion, of adaptation of educational equipment to the demands,—that the board determined in 1905 to try for five years the plan of limiting the numbers to one thousand students.[2] The result was advantageous to the college work, though introducing many difficulties of administration. At the expiration of the time of trial the board voted to continue the limit indefinitely. Great advantages have accrued to the College from this policy. It has had time to develop its facilities, to meet the demands of its entire student-body for consideration more calmly than when troubled by questions of the accommodation of more students, to reflect on its educational policy and a fitting educational equipment, to care for the welfare of the individual, and to face many issues bearing on

[1] *Reports* of 1889, 1893, 1908, p. 22, and article in *Educational Review*, by James M. Taylor, 1894. *Cf. Princeton*, Collins (this series), p. 115.

[2] *Reports*, 1905, p. 14; 1910, p. 15; 1894, and 1904.

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the larger comfort of life and the greater efficiency of the student.[1]

The effort to keep an undergraduate college abreast of the demands of the newer time called for the establishment of new professorships. It has already been shown how one branch of the alumnæ had demanded, under Dr. Caldwell's administration, a chair of history, but it is not perhaps remembered by many that few colleges of that day were fortunate enough to have developed special departments in that essential branch of study. In 1887, however, the professorship was established, to the great satisfaction of students and graduates. The comparatively new subject, biology, then forging to the front in its zoological phase, superseded the older botany in 1890, with a chair distinct from that of natural history. The one department of classics was subdivided into Greek and Latin. French and German, which had been taught by instructors of the department of languages, were made professorships; economics, long taught as an adjunct of English and history, was made a separate foundation in 1893; music and the fine arts were made college subjects under college professors in 1892; chemistry was taken from the department of physics and made a distinct professorship; philosophy, hitherto attached to the chair of the president, was separated in 1904, the president retaining ethics; a chair of Biblical literature

[1] The president suggested to the board in 1911 a plan for enlarging the college by the multiplication of "units" of colleges, under one business management, with separate faculties and social life, but closely related under one corporate name. It is a possible solution of the unfortunate overgrowth of our larger American colleges. See *Reports*, 1911, 1913, p. 12, and *Educ. Rev.*, June, 1911.

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THE SANDERS LABORATORY

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was established in 1902; and in 1909 the subject of psychology, late development of the department of philosophy, gained a professorship. In 1913, the increasing interest among women in political science led to a gift for the establishment of a chair in that subject.[1]

It is worthy of note, throughout this progress, that while insisting on the worth to life of the "older learning," Vassar met promptly and fully the call of the scientific demands of our time. As has been already stated, its first laboratory building, devoted to physics and chemistry, was among the earliest dedicated to college work. Rooms were set apart for laboratory work in "natural history," until the New England alumnæ gave a building for biology, physiology, and geology. Later the Sanders Laboratory, equipped admirably for chemistry, set space free in the older building for a laboratory of the newer science of psychology. From the beginning astronomy had been provided with a well-furnished observatory.

It is perhaps necessary to remind the reader that the demands for scholarship in the faculties of the colleges had been steadily increasing for many years. More was exacted for an appointment than in the earlier days. There were as great scholars then, but the average scholarship was now much higher. Indeed there was danger in the latter times that the formal attainments of a preparatory scholarship, represented by much of

[1] Associate professorships were instituted in 1884, and assistant professorships in 1913. The president held the chair of ethics till 1914. It is of interest to note that at the end of the first five years of this administration only ten of thirty-two of the old faculty remained. At the end of ten years eight of the old faculty were still active in the college, and there had been fifteen changes in the board, ten of them by death.

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the work for the doctorate of philosophy, might blind the colleges to the supreme need of the teacher, and that the cry for research might dull the hearing to the demand for vital, human contact with the undergraduate. The increased emphasis on study and attainment was however needed. This influence built up a larger intellectual life in the College. Men and women trained in our best universities and many of them students abroad, as well, brought to the College an atmosphere of more progressive scholarship, though the College continued to insist on the primary need of teaching ability. Individual study and research were supplemented by departmental clubs and meetings, and a faculty club was formed to hear and discuss papers. Some wrote and published works of note, and contributed to the reviews and magazines. Some departments held meetings for the regular training of instructors in the art of teaching and encouraged them to undertake graduate study. A good number gave direct service to the State and city, in boards, school committees, and efforts for various reforms. Some were members, often officers, of the great national societies of learning. A vigorous mental life thus sustained often pointed the wonder at the slow growth of faith on the part of those connected with colleges for men in the thoroughness and ideals of a woman's college. It seemed incredible, in earlier years, that critics could fail to appreciate the fact that the faculty was made up of educated men and women who would not tolerate lower standards than they had been used to in their own colleges and universities.

Throughout this period the challenge of the advocates of vocational training in the women's colleges was incessant. The spirit which a generation earlier had de-

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nounced all college education as a luxury and as useless for life, came to accept it as desirable, only now again to lose faith and to demand immediate preparation for some occupation instead of a general fitness for life. Old foes assumed new faces, and " practical " became identified with occupational. The appeal to the hard-headed man in the street was irresistible and the reaction on the colleges, especially in the State institutions, was unmistakable. Business courses, preliminary courses for the professions, normal school work, household training, courses for nurses, were planned for the time, already too little, which had been granted to general training and culture. The teaching of the past, the efficiency of college men and women when tested by a course of years, the larger intellectual culture and resource supplied by the more liberal training were forgotten in the so-called " practical " plea for immediate use. Especially was this urged on the women's college with the strange assumption that a college can fitly or well teach the details of domestic functions and the responsibilities of motherhood. Unhappily the superficial doctrine found a reception in some of them, muddling their ideals, blurring their educational vision, and threatening to weaken their ministry to broad and enduring culture. The trustees and faculty of Vassar stood throughout this period for liberal education and refused to introduce the subjects urged by the vocationists, not undervaluing their worth, but claiming that experience demonstrated that the general training promised a higher usefulness, greater efficiency, and far larger resources for life. The contest was the more difficult because among the most distinguished leaders of the new subjects were found some devoted and able

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graduates of Vassar, all trained, be it noted, under a system of general and liberal education.[1]

The history of the growth of the library deserves more than the passing notice already given. Its first home was in a room on the third floor of Main, now much enlarged and devoted to the meetings of the faculty. It was moved later to the spacious rooms occupying the fourth and fifth stories, originally built for the art gallery. In 1886 it filled these with about twelve thousand volumes and had annexed a room for pamphlets and library work. Frederick F. Thompson built the Library Annex to Main in 1892-93 for a college whose students and faculty were chiefly under one roof, unaccustomed to go out to recitations, for meals, or for books. It was then a great boon, relieving the congestion and allowing the adaptation of the space formerly used for much needed recitation rooms. The beautiful room was soon outgrown and in 1905 Mrs. Frederick F. Thompson dedicated to the memory of her husband a new Library building, a joy and inspiration to every reader, notable among American library edifices. By 1914 the collections had grown to eighty-one thousand volumes and several thousand pamphlets, an increase of sixty-six thousand since 1886, all selected by the faculty of the College. The board had contributed annually, for books, $4,000 for many years. Many funds had been established by classes and by individuals, and once the alumnæ had given $10,000 to be spent outright for books. The Founder's fund provided the periodicals

[1] The president discussed this subject at length in his report to the trustees, 1904, pp. 14-17. *Cf.* also 1910, pp. 9 and 10, and 1912, pp. 19 and 20. An allied issue, the provision of a "scientific dietary" for 1,000 people, was discussed in 1904, pp. 17 and 18.

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and for the binding, and the expenses of the library for salaries of its trained staff and ordinary service were charged to the general college account. The steadfast policy was to foster the growth of this center of the college life. For thirty years, till 1910, one gracious presence presided over the work, and for many years Frances A. Wood was the sole custodian and worker in the library.[1]

Significant in the history of the educational development of the College was the celebration in 1890 of the twenty-fifth anniversary. That antedated the times of the large college functions now so frequent and so taxing on the time and money of our institutions, and women's colleges, in particular, were unfamiliar with them.[2] When the president was inaugurated, for example, in 1886, there were no college delegates invited and the ceremonial occupied a brief time at the close of the exercises of Commencement. There was now, however, a fine response from colleges and universities and representatives from most of the leading ones. The exercises were combined with the Commencement anniversary. On that day, by suggestion of the committee, the president made an address on "The Future of the Woman's College," and in the evening received the delegates on behalf of the College. The next day, the special anniversary, a beautiful June day, a great audience was gathered in a huge tent set under the elms near the lake walk. After the president's address of welcome, music was rendered by a part of the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera House of New York,

[1] *Cf.* F. A. Wood, *Evolution of the Library; President's Reports*, 1905, 1910, 1913.

[2] Even as late as the sesquicentennial of Princeton no delegates of women's colleges were invited.

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a cantata, composed by Professor Ritter for the occasion was sung by a chorus of students, an historical address was delivered by Benson J. Lossing, historian and charter trustee of the College. The great feature of the day was the oration by George William Curtis, then the foremost orator of the time, one of the most eloquent of his many great addresses and dedicated to a subject to which he had always given his deepest sympathies.

Reference may properly be made at this point to the proposed celebration, in October, 1915, of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the College. A committee of the trustees and faculty has had the subject in charge for nearly two years. It had been planned to invite distinguished leaders in the work of education, both men and women, from Europe as well as from our own country. The war in Europe has compelled a modification of the proposed program, but it is intended that the event shall mark more than the mere anniversary of a college, great though that surely is, and that it shall commemorate the wide expansion of women's activities, interests, and powers since Vassar opened its doors, with suggestion of fresh opportunity and privilege and visions of a larger day.

Worthy of remembrance also is the "Greek Play" given by the department of Greek in 1892-93. This performance of Sophocles' *Antigone* drew representatives of the classics from a large number of universities and colleges, and was regarded by them as a distinct contribution to the repute of the College for sound scholarship. The play was most successfully rendered in the original by a company of the students under the direction of the professor of Greek.

The grant to Vassar in 1898 of a chapter of the Phi

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Beta Kappa Society should also be recorded. There was question in the senate as to this breaking of a tradition and the admission of a separate woman's college to the fraternity. As in so many other directions, Vassar was here the opener of the door to larger privilege, and the Mu chapter of New York was the precursor of chapters in other women's colleges. The chapter holds, besides its business meetings, an annual meeting for the initiation of new members, followed by a reception, and at this meeting often addresses of keen intellectual stimulus are given by members of the faculty. On Monday evening in commencement week each year, the Phi Beta Kappa oration is given by some scholar or statesman, and the list of these addresses includes many names and subjects of distinction,—President Nicholas Murray Butler on "Five Evidences of an Education," the Hon. Whitelaw Reid on "The Thing to Do," the Hon. Andrew D. White on "Evolution Versus Revolution as a Policy," Professor Myra Reynolds on "The Attitude of English Poetry Toward the Common Man," Mr. Talcott Williams on "The New Education and the Old," Dr. John H. Finley on "The Tele-Victorian Age," and Professor Frances G. Peabody on "The Idealist and the Modern World."

The Material Problem

Unhappily, the problem of educational progress in any institution is complicated by financial and material considerations. More salaries, new buildings for new needs, and enlargement of the old and the maintenance of the "plant," demand increasing endowments and larger outlay for physical necessities. Unhappily also those who must strive to meet these wants are in con-

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stant danger of misjudgment, as if their chief collegiate interests are material. Even so great a leader, teacher, and author as Dr. McCosh, to speak only of the dead, was accused of allowing the temporalities to outweigh the spiritual interests of Princeton because he worked so successfully for a foundation for his academic colleagues.

When Vassar faced its new problems in 1886, it had an endowment, apart from scholarship funds which add nothing to the resources of a college, and often substract from them, of $311,973.51.[1] It was thought to be wealthy because Mr. Vassar's gifts were declared to be the largest ever made by a living man to education, but altogether they were only about $800,000, and the great prices of the time of the Civil War had absorbed in buildings much that had been intended for endowments.

Its buildings in 1886 were the great Main Building, the Museum Building (formerly the riding school), the Observatory, the Lodge, and the Vassar Brothers Laboratory, all but the last built under the Founder's direction. There were no residences for professors beside the suites provided in Main. The ground covered by the present quadrangle and the professors' row was a farm in the summer, fields of corn and potatoes, and in the winter a wild waste. By the lake was an old mill used as a pump-house and for storage, and cow barns, horse barns, and ice houses reached up the hill and

[1] Many of the early scholarships of Vassar were $6,000, invested at 7%. The charge to students was $400. The college bound itself for all time to educate a girl on this foundation. With the cost $500, and the interest on the fund from 4½ to 5%,—it is clear that these scholarships have become an expense to the college.

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covered its crest, along the street. The sewage "system" was a pipe emptying into the stream by the glen, and the water supply from wells was pumped into the tanks in Main by a turbine wheel at the lake, or in dry days by a small steam pump. The College manufactured its gas, but outside the buildings there was not a light on the campus. The Gymnasium was the hall in the Museum Building used from 1889 to 1914 for a hall of sculpture, and here also the students gave their occasional plays. The Laboratory of physics and chemistry was about half its present size and only the first and second floors were used or usable. The "natural sciences" had their laboratories and lecture rooms in the Museum Building.

The first effort to enlarge the endowments was made distinctly in the interest of salaries for the faculty. It was before the present easy talk of millions, and the mark set was $100,000. The alumnæ numbered less than seven hundred, and there was no organized effort on their part. The president was asked to raise the fund and found the College practically without a constituency. At the end of the first year only $61,000 was reported and it took a second year to complete the fund, but it was raised in difficult times, by weary pilgrimages, by numerous letters, much of it from new-made friends, and the president was obliged meanwhile to keep up his college classes and the general work of the administration. It was Vassar's first appeal, and notwithstanding the generous help of the press, it proved a lack of knowledge and appreciation of woman's education on the part of an unconvinced public.

In June of 1889 the president reported the prospect of receiving a large sum from the estate of John Guy Vassar, and made sundry recommendations regarding

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its use for educational purposes.[1] This was premature. The will was attacked by distant relatives of Mr. Vassar whom he intended to exclude from a share in it, and was broken. It had violated the law brought into full light by the famous Cornell University case, and also, in constituting an orphan asylum, a common principle forbidding bequests to institutions not in being. The College compromised its case and sacrificed several hundred thousand dollars, but it was wisely advised, in light of the later decision of the Court of Appeals. It received upwards of $400,000, which very substantially aided it in its plans for progress. In 1902-03 it obtained from the Legislature a change of its charter, removing the original limits on its holdings, and preventing any such disaster in the future.

Once more, in 1903-04, the needs of the College drove it to appeal to the public. Mr. John D. Rockefeller, then a trustee, made a promise to duplicate every dollar raised by the College before June, 1904, up to $200,000. The alumnæ, now well organized, did valiant work, the president solicited funds in person and by correspondence, and many trustees gave able service. The citizens of Poughkeepsie, men and women, organized to help. But it was a year of financial depression. Only three gifts reached $10,000 each, only three more $5,000, two $2,000, one $1,500, and the rest were in sums of $1,000 and under, often representing great and touching sacrifice. The outcome was $350,000 and later the alumnæ, organized for years to this end, and always working for educational endowment, raised the sum to $400,000,—all distinctly for educational use.[2] In 1905, after main-

[1] Printed by direction of the board and a copy sent to each trustee.

[2] *Cf. Report* of president for 1904, pp. 19-23. The president indicates clearly to the board that this method of raising money is

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taining for forty years a charge of $400 for tuition and board (including furnished rooms, heat, and light), the trustees raised the charge to $500.

Buildings came to the College with less appearance of effort. In the summer of 1886 a Conservatory was built by a citizen of Poughkeepsie. In 1889, the Gymnasium, gift of alumnæ and former students, was dedicated; professors' houses, which had been urged by the president in 1889, were begun in 1891; and by 1892 the first new residence hall, Strong, was in process of building, and the new Library, the annex to the Main Building, had been given. Students had begun to come in larger numbers and the new residence hall was filled at once. The seats in the old chapel were reset so as to accommodate a larger number and rooms in Music Hall, from which pianos were moved out, were allotted to students till the new building could be prepared. The College even rented an old hotel in town, ran stages regularly to it, placed a portion of its freshmen there, and there provided for part of their work and a daily chapel service.

But now the accommodation for lecture- and class-rooms was overcrowded, and any further growth was conditioned on obtaining the gift of a building for academic purposes. Mr. Rockefeller gave it, the trustees erected a residence hall (Raymond), and in 1897 both were filled. The development of the College was thus determined, and as the need became evident, there followed the Swift Infirmary, gift of Mrs. Atwater of

unwise. The great interest enlisted is evident enough, but it calls for great sacrifice on the part of many who have little to give and for the president it is a killing policy. A slower method, gradually enlisting the sympathy of large givers, supplemented by systematic work of an alumnæ committee, promises more at less cost.

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'77, the New England building for biology and cognate sciences, given by the New England alumnæ, and "Lathrop" and "Davison," the latter a gift of Mr. J. D. Rockefeller, were built for residence in 1901 and 1902. Further residence halls were erected later, "North" in 1907, and the "Olivia Josselyn," gift of Mrs. Russell Sage, in 1912.

A new epoch in college building was inaugurated by the gift of the fine Norman chapel by two alumnæ, Mrs. Mary Thaw Thompson of '77 and Mrs. Mary Morris Pratt of '80, which was dedicated in 1904 by a service participated in by distinguished leaders of various branches of the church, and by an organ recital by the great French organist, Guilmant. The splendid Gothic Library followed in 1905, dedicated by Mrs. Frederick F. Thompson to the memory of her husband, long a trustee and benefactor, with fitting ceremonies and an address by Mr. Hamilton Mabie. In 1909, again, the friends of the College gathered for a ceremony of dedication in the new laboratory of chemistry, presented to the College by Dr. Henry M. Sanders in memory of his wife. The plea long made for a building for students' use,[1] for the association and its various organizations, for meetings, plays, and social purposes, was answered from an anonymous source and the building was opened in 1913. In that year, also, was announced the gift of an art building by Mr. and Mrs. Charles M. Pratt, for the considerable collections of the College and for the accommodation of the department and its work. The building was named by the donors, Taylor Hall. It was finished in the winter of 1914-15, in itself a beautiful and extensive Gothic building and furnishing through its portals a superb entrance to the College. It em-

[1] *Reports*, 1901 and 1908.

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THE CHAPEL

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phasizes the stand Vassar has always taken for the thorough study of the arts as a part of a liberal education. Now, also, the same generous friends fitted up the tower entrance room of the chapel in a rich and impressive style, for a memorial hall for such as have given signal service to Vassar.

During this period, rebuilding and readaptation of buildings was also found necessary. The old Laboratory was enlarged three times, much of the Museum building reconstructed for the arts, the Gymnasium practically doubled, the Observatory enlarged, and old Main greatly changed and developed.

The campus is said to have been laid out originally by Frederick Law Olmstead. It was a fine plan for a very small part of the present domain. Till 1892 the portion not contiguous to the buildings was used by the farmer, for grass, corn, potatoes. With the expansion of building came demands for beautifying the new campus. The feeling had grown strong by 1904 [1] that some careful planning should be done, and later the work was taken up in a co-operative way by the alumnæ and trustees, and with the advice of Samuel Parsons plans were developed and approved.[2] Lack of funds prevented the trustees and alumnæ from executing them at once, but a new lake was constructed below Sunset by Mr. and Mrs. Pratt, the grounds above and about the old lake were planted and beautified, and the campus, already beautiful, with its fine trees and well-arranged buildings, gave promise of becoming one of the notable college campuses of the land.

Surprise is often expressed at the maintenance of a

[1] *Cf. President's Report*, p. 12.
[2] See *Reports*, 1908, p. 18; 1909, p. 15; 1910, p. 19; 1911, p. 23; 1912, pp. 22, 23; 1913, p. 10.

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farm by the College. A long tradition is behind this, dating to the original gift of over two hundred acres of land. It was thought best to secure pure milk by maintaining a separate herd of cows, and the large amount of labor on the grounds and for transportation of college goods, called for the maintenance of a number of horses. With the growth of the College, and necessary purchase also of land for a sewage farm, the estate grew to about seven hundred and fifty acres, and a large herd of cows and about twenty horses were maintained on it in 1914. Erection of model barns, a milk-house, and other necessary buildings involved large expense which the farm was supposed to meet.

The employees of the College, of all sorts, in its business departments, reached about three hundred and fifty during this period. It must be remembered, however, that not only did it sustain seven large residence halls, and thus a large force of domestic helpers, but its own great heating and lighting plant, its own waterworks and sewage system, its carpenter shop, its own laundry, and its separate infirmary, as well as its gardens and its farm. Electric light was introduced throughout the College in 1911-13. Three millions of dollars, at least, were put into the material basis of the College in this period, and all to meet absolute and crying wants of the college life.

College Life

To describe a day of college life is to write out the changes of a kaleidoscope; to attempt to gather up its spirit for fifty years is an endeavor to catch the motions of an electric fan, so swift are the changes of the one force that moves through all.

It is a common and old-time complaint of college

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letters that they have little to tell of classrooms, teachers, studies, books read, and conversations that are intellectual in range and purpose. Is it like the eagerness of adults to find material outside the limits of their regular pursuits? Certain it is that students prefer to talk of play, and the memories of "old boys" and "old girls" seem continually to hark back to pranks and fun and the less serious relations of college life.

When one entered Vassar in the olden time, one was ushered into the parlors at the left of the entrance—not the great spacious apartments of to-day—and welcomed by members of the faculty who were free from academic duties, and conducted to the treasurer's office and to the lady principal, who assigned the rooms. Parents and friends received a cordial welcome and the atmosphere was wholly hospitable. The latter days have brought a great development of this same spirit, and now the newcomers are welcomed by a delegation of alumnæ and students who try to make the applicants feel at home at once and whose cheer and brightness are long recalled by parents and guardians. No happier introduction could be given to a college life. Each newcomer is presented with the "Freshman Bible," a little volume of information regarding the College.

College opens formally with the chapel service of Friday evening, and after a Saturday of settling rooms and purchasing furniture, the College gathers Sunday morning for its service of worship and the opening sermon of the year, and after the voluntary evening meeting the older classmen call on newcomers and look after those who are cast down on this Sunday, possibly the first spent away from home. Work begins briskly Monday and almost at once college life assumes an air

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of regularity as if the machine had never stopped. But the routine is largely in appearance and along the great general lines of life. Recitations begin at half-past eight, and through forenoon and much of the afternoon the dominant notes are the classroom, the Library, and the study. Play time comes and the athletic field is alive with basketball teams, and with freshman hockey-teams, trained from the first under direction of the gymnasium staff, and the tennis courts are crowded. The walks over the fields or over "Sunset" or "Richmond," along country roads, and the shopping in town, inevitable and constant, meet the wants of other times and other individuals. Later in the season, when the Gymnasium is opened, and the field deserted, skating, coasting, and walking, as outside sports, and the indoor sports, such as swimming, supplement regular gymnasium training.

Even girl-students hail the dinner hour, and in these days of exercise and health the echoes from the dining-room at six tell of a day of hearty happy life, even if, to nervous ears, the life sometimes seems superabundant. Chapel exercises are at seven, ideal hour, after the drive of the day, before the quiet of the evening, a brief space of peace and uplift of soul in vision of the eternal verities, a place remembered by thousands of alumnæ with peculiar gratitude and pleasure. The chimes have summoned the college from the buildings or the singing on "the steps," and it is a sight to be remembered as classes come singing across the lawns, or file down the broad paths in impressive phalanx. Then, according to the evening, the Library is sought, the study, the social converse with one's fellows, the literary club, the lecture, and the occasional great event, some celebration or dance. It is a full, large, free, generous life, abun-

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dant in opportunities, great in possibilities, fine in its general spirit and outcome.

As was intimated, the intellectual features of this life are not emphasized in talk or in the more popular tales of the colleges, but they exist, and it is worth remarking that they exist as fully as they ever did, albeit sometimes in different forms. The opinion often expressed that women who went to college in the late sixties and early seventies were superior, as a class, to the students of to-day in seriousness, in purpose, and in studiousness, must be based either on forgetfulness of the past, or possibly on ignorance of it and of the college girl of to-day. Frivolous she sometimes is—and was—but a close acquaintance with both periods justifies the opinion that the average work, if not of higher grade, is certainly not lower now, and that the number of girls viewing life seriously and asking how they may make it tell for the welfare of all is probably greater now than in any previous time. One frivolous student does more to create public opinion, however, than twenty steady ones who quietly attend to their business.

Clubs for discussion of contemporary literature and current events always exist, and smaller, less formal, companies of readers of solid books. Departmental clubs, especially in Greek, German, French, pursue studiously archæological and literary subjects, the Senior and Junior Societies, *T and M* and *Qui Vive,* cultivate discussion and debate in frequent meetings, and have had annually a great open debate, one of the most popular events of the college year, where some vital subject is debated, and judgment given by three judges from abroad. This has also led to an occasional intercollegiate debate with Wellesley and Mt. Holyoke. The zeal of preparation for all these debates is one mark of

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intellectual interest, and large numbers are drawn into it.

The *Miscellany* is another indication of this spirit, a monthly literary magazine, edited and conducted by the students, and recently (in 1914) appearing in weekly editions with editorials and points of view, bearing on current news and opinion. The senior class in the spring of each year issues an annual, *The Vassarion*, representing the non-academic activities of student life and serving as an illustrated chronicle of the history of the class for four years.

In its origin the Philalethean Society was literary. Even down to about 1890 one of its four chapters preserved the literary tradition in its meetings for readings, discussions of recent books and current events. Then the society in general was given over to dramatics, and was the chief source of home entertainments for the College. In the old Gymnasium, in the Museum building, it staged four plays annually for a crowded and enthusiastic audience, and it used to be said, and is probably as true to-day, that when a chairman and committee had chosen a play and secured the lady principal's approval for it, had selected a cast, and got the names passed by the lady principal (on the basis of social reasons), the physician, and the president's office (on the basis of rank in studies), had trained the players, made scenery, and produced the play, they had had a liberal education. In later years the number of plays was reduced to three, and the third became the "outdoor play," generally one of Shakespeare's, given on a day in May either by the beautiful gardens or in the natural theater under the trees on Sunset Hill.

This combination of the intellectual, the æsthetic, and the social readily introduces us to the purely social

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THE OLIVIA JOSSELYN HALL

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aspects of the college life. Conditions were much simpler to the end of the last century than now. Till in the nineties the whole college life was in one building, the president's apartments in the center, and four professors' houses in the wings. Social conditions were very easy and natural and as pleasant as they were constant. So fully centered were the life and work that when the great blizzard of 1888 shut off the College from the world for two or three days, the work went on in the regular classrooms as usual, and only the professor of physics and chemistry and the professors of music and painting, who lived in town, were absent. Great changes have come with the enlargement of the College. There is no longer one center, even though the senior class is all resident in Main, and has always its special and attractive parlor. Six other large buildings, filled with students and teachers, have their own independent life, their special gatherings in their own halls and parlors, their teas, their parties, their callers, their impromptu performances, their services of song,—all that so easily develops among a great company of young women. Their life is full of small social events. Tea-rooms in the vicinity invite in the late afternoon, or tea is served in teachers' and students' rooms, and sometimes by the head of the house in the general hall. There is constant calling among the students and by friends. There are senior receptions, to the faculty, to the classes, to visiting mothers and friends, to distinguished strangers.

Then there are the greater college events, such as the outdoor reception, on a Saturday afternoon early in the year, given to the new freshmen by the Students' and Christian Associations; the first hall-play, made memorable by the return of the recent graduates in large

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numbers, with hearty fellowship and fun and song; Thanksgiving, with its dinner to all remaining in college, occasional after-dinner speeches, famous "stunts," —song, recitation, and impromptu plays and dance; the great dances of the juniors and seniors and their invited men, with the next day crowded with visits, picnics, boat-rides, and Glee Club concert. It was very different a few years back when the Philalethean Anniversary followed Thanksgiving, with an address by some eminent speaker, introduced by the proud president of the society, followed by square dances or an endless promenade up and down the great second corridor of Main.

And lecturers come and concerts are given, generally on Friday evenings through most of the year (sometimes gifts to the College),—like the song cycle "The Persian Garden," or a great organ recital, or the song service of Russian music given by the choir from the Russian cathedral in New York; or a reading from Shakespeare by Furness or Locke Richardson, or from Browning by Corson, or of Gilbert Murray's translation of Euripides' *Electra* by Edith Wynne Matthison, or from the Bible by Charles Rann Kennedy, or from their own works by Lady Gregory and Alfred Noyes. Thus distinguished men and women become part of the mental furniture of the young,—the Emperor of Brazil, Kingsley, Arnold, Freeman, Wallace, the younger Darwin, Bryce, Cambon, Gilbert Murray, Lanciani, Huelsen, Lamprecht—they have all been here, and a host of others, great in literature and in the State.

As the spring comes on, Founder's Day looms large, once devoted to an address, a dance, or a promenade, now enjoyed with college songs, addresses, pageants, plays, a home-day for Vassar, and a better reminder than of yore of the Founder's life and gift. The rush-

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ing days of that season soon bring senior vacation, the boat-ride of the juniors to those so soon to leave them, and in these last years the senior dance to their invited men, and then Commencement season with its crowds of visitors, its tree ceremonies, its Class Day, with the exquisite daisy chain, its receptions, the formal commencement exercises of graduation, the alumnæ luncheon, and the trustees' dinner to faculty, alumnæ, and graduating class. Only a few years back, when the exercises were in the old chapel, varied then with music by seniors who had had special college training, all the audience was invited below to an informal luncheon which was served, with such order as was possible, to a frequently hurried and over-eager throng. On the night of Commencement Day the class supper comes and the singing by the seniors at their tree and then the partings, and the College is given over to workmen and a busy dean's office, while faculty and students scatter to their play, their travel, and their study.

The religious aspect of the Vassar life has been healthful, tonic, and strong. In every faculty are those who have small interest in this side of college life, but the College has stood steadfastly by Mr. Vassar's own ideal of a college,—religious but unsectarian. Its daily chapel service has been uniformly marked by a reverent and interested spirit. Its pulpit has been filled by distinguished ministers of various branches of the church. It has sustained an evening meeting on Sundays, well-attended, to which many alumnæ look back as a source of spiritual life. Its Christian Association has been vital, interested, active in good works, in the College and in the neighborhood. It has held a Thursday evening meeting, and once a month has a speaker on some subject of missionary interest, philanthropy,

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or reform. Large numbers of Bible and mission study classes among the students are now sustained by it.[1]

Vassar has always had athletics enough to guarantee it the title of a college. Even in the olden time when, in a phrase of Leslie Stephen, "athletics had not yet organized idleness," and when there was little or no athletics in American colleges in general, Vassar had its gymnasium in what is now the Museum, and on the floor of that building may yet be seen the painted places for the feet of the girls who were trained in Dio Lewis's system of calisthenics. And the young College had also its riding school and arena, from which under lead of a German baron the young ladies rode forth into the country about, and its croquet, and its compulsory exercise—undefined, but often a walk or a saunter,—and its hills for coasting and its lake for skating in winter and for rowing in spring and fall. The winter sports are still a great resource of faculty and students and a second fine lake has been added recently, shallower than the other, and allowing skating for a longer period. On this as the greatest of the winter sporting events the carnival takes place,—the lake alight with lanterns, the flag across it, and a band of music playing for the skaters in the grand march and in their freer skating from bonfire to bonfire about the pond.

The well-organized Athletic Association now controls and directs all these matters,—games of basketball, baseball, tennis, hockey, running, jumping, and general track athletics,—and in the Gymnasium there are swimming, fencing, fancy dancing, and other sports, beside the required work. Through the first weeks until the Gymnasium is opened, play is compulsory for the freshmen, under instruction of the Gymnasium. It is

[1] *Cf. President's Reports*, 1912, p. 10; 1909, p. 11.

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interesting to note that only for a few years has the fine circle, surrounded by its great cedar hedge and flower gardens, been used as an "athletic circle." It was constructed for ornamental purposes.

A spirit of democracy is wont to be part of the ideal of every college community and this has been conspicuously true at Vassar. Its constituency has always been greatly varied as to earthly possessions, and if it has had the rich, it has also had enough poor to overstrain its large scholarship funds year by year. It has been a downright, simple, honest life these girls have lived among themselves, with a tendency rather to excessive democracy at times than to aristocracy, as when the Students' Association breaks up the groups at the dinner table and compels them to scatter for the sake of a wider acquaintance and for the keeping down of a caste spirit. One must be real in the possession of certain social or intellectual qualities to lead in such a society and these are fruits of neither wealth nor poverty.

The democratic spirit here has been fostered by the facts that all rooms on campus (best and worst) are the same price; that no student is allowed to keep her private horse, or automobile; that simple dressing is the tradition; that the College is in the country, and so surrounded by few temptations for spending money. Moreover, to an extent almost unparalleled in any college, the faculty live in the campus houses with the students in the easiest and most natural social relations, so that there is no sharp dividing line between faculty and students. And among the students themselves, the units for social events (receptions, basketball games, debates) are the classes, and there have never been any fraternities at the College, so that the whole tendency of the social life is away from small, exclusive societies.

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Moreover, from an early date the students have shown an interest in the welfare of the women employed in the College, and especially in forming classes for their instruction (classes which covered many subjects —from dancing to geometry). A new step was taken in 1889, when a room was furnished for the maids by the College and a club formed under the advice of a few members of the faculty. Gradually the work developed until the Students' Association determined to build a clubhouse and support a worker for the benefit of the large number of women employed at the College. The house was opened in 1907 and soon after endowed to provide for the support of the "worker."[1] The life that centers here is one of the best evidences of how earnestly the College tries to carry out its ideals of social service.

In planning the life of any large community of young women the subject of social rules has to be carefully considered. The early, stringent laws of the College had been relaxed and greatly modified before the beginning of this period. There is much to be said in their defense. The public demand on girls was severe and the avoidance of criticism very necessary. The youth of the "preparatories" must also be remembered. There is testimony in the training and power of the old system in the alumnæ who so commonly aver, ten years after graduation, that the old plan was good and that there is an unfortunate tendency to slackness in manners and standards.

There was still, at the beginning of this period, a *Stu-*

[1] *Cf. Report*, 1909; in 1912 the president asked formal reports of this work to be submitted, for historical purposes, with his annual report. He summarized that of 1912 in his own report, pp. 8 and 9.

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A CLASS-DAY CUSTOM

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dents' Manual, with many minute regulations, exercise of an hour each day was still compelled and reported upon; lights had to be out at ten o'clock. A corridor meeting was held each week and reports made to the teacher in charge, though this had become in many cases a merely perfunctory performance. Gradually, however, restraints were relaxed, the old Manual was abolished, and a short list of *Directions for the Student* substituted, dealing chiefly with a few social rules still esteemed needful in the community life. At length, in the fall of 1888, it was proposed by the faculty to the Students' Association, that that body should take over the enforcement of the rules as to exercise, quiet in the buildings, chapel attendance, and the ten o'clock rule. The suggestion was for an honor system, the students agreeing to the rules by signing the constitution, and then assuming that every student would bind herself in honor to keep them. After much discussion, under the lead of the Class of '89, this system was adopted by students and faculty, reports ceased, there were no proctors of any kind, and a different attitude toward the regulations at once grew up.

The system worked almost perfectly for a time, and quite ideally for a number of years. At the worst it was as well maintained as any system ever tried which involves watching and reporting. Inevitably, however, with years and growing numbers, there was an increase of those who could not live by honor, and at length the Association itself introduced a system of reports and proctors, which altered the principle involved and substituted the authority of the students' officers for the previous authority of the faculty. Before long the burden became too great and the Association asked the faculty to resume responsibility for the attendance at

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chapel.[1] Meanwhile conditions had so changed that a compulsory rule for exercise was deemed unnecessary, and after some discussion with the students the ten o'clock rule was also abolished.

A great development of "student government" took place in these years. All over the land, and especially among women students, the opinion grew that students should have more share in determining all the non-academic rules and practices of the college, and oftentimes resentment was felt at any assumption of authority by the faculty or administrative offices. Especially in the latter years of this period, when restraints of any kind came to be resented in society, and therefore in colleges, the organizations in the various institutions for women reached out after the complete control of the inner and social life of the colleges, seeking the direction not only of the enforcement of quiet and good order, but the making of the rules regarding absences from the college, journeys, drives, and general social relations that did not interfere with academic appointments. Many institutions appeared to yield entirely to this demand, and it must be said that the general sense of order and the good judgment and sanity of the young women saved the situation from the effects that might have been anticipated by those unfamiliar with the college girl.

At Vassar the progress was gradual. All these questions were talked over in the joint committee of faculty and students, but neither the administrative offices nor the majority of the faculty were inclined to yield to the extreme claims made. This grew out of no distrust of the spirit of the students, but rested rather in the conviction of the authorities that they too had responsi-

[1] *President's Report*, 1902.

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bilities for this side also of college life and that to commit the whole social welfare of the students to the care of their elected officers was to impose a great burden on them which in fairness to the claims of their studies they should not be asked to bear. Moreover, the constant change of the executive body, the passing of the chief directors of legislation—the senior class—after a single year of experience, was likely, it seemed, to give unsteadiness to college policies and life. The Association, however, gained considerable increase of powers, and regulated a large portion of the student activities and customs with more or less success, but the rules of social conduct beyond the campus and the absence from College continued to be in the control of the authorities.[1]

Doubtless the growth of non-academic activities at the College means that the life is too full for its best, but that is merely a reflection of the actual conditions of the life outside college walls. Here at least is an honest effort to meet the acknowledged evil by the students themselves, and their own committees lay restraints on individuals, permitting no more than a definite amount of service on committees and in special work, limiting hours of rehearsals for plays, and trying in every way to curb excessive indulgence in these extra-collegiate engagements. Of course there is the counter-danger of excessive laws and too many of them, but that also

[1] The president expressed the views of the majority of the faculty in his discussions of this question in his reports. *Cf.* especially that of 1907. In 1911 he paid high tribute to the steadiness and admirable spirit of the association, indicated the fact that there could be no *right* acquired by a student who came to enjoy the privileges of a college, but that expediency had justified the larger grant of powers. The restrictions should be urged only "in the interest of the student," but "the responsibility is finally on the administration." *Cf.* also *Report* of 1902, p. 19.

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is the marked tendency of all our political life to-day. The fact that too many laws defeat obedience to law is perhaps seen sooner in the little college world. But the tendency to overorganize is as real and as hurtful here as in other places. It tends to injure or even kill the spirit which seeks the welfare of the whole, not because of legislation but because of a higher motive within.

A more determined self-denial in regard to the too numerous calls of social life, a truer valuation of what is worth while, a higher sense of the more enduring ministry to life of the reading of good books in comparison with the gains of administrative work, and a more persistent individualism to balance excessive social spirit are essential to the reform that all student life—and other life—is now demanding.

Relation of the College to Problems of the Day

The question as to the fit attitude of the College toward great public causes had arisen very early in the history of Vassar, as was indeed inevitable. The new attitude toward woman's education was but an incident in a larger movement that was sure to touch the whole social and political status of women and to involve discussion and interest on the part of all. The stand that the College should take toward the public agitation of issues that might arise confronted Dr. Raymond at an early date, and was met by him in a spirit which recognized the importance of the questions but the undesirability of introducing public advocates for them or against them to the College. The record of those days shows that in the lectures and subjects presented to the College there was no exclusion of them, but a steadfast

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purpose to hold the College to its proper business of education.

About 1907 the general interest in suffrage for women focused itself in fresh organizations and new endeavors to propagate the faith. In the course of 1907-08, official action was demanded by an invitation from a prominent college president to unite with five other women's colleges in securing a speaker who should each year present to the students the subject of Equal Suffrage. The president of Vassar was invited to become a member of a College Advisory Board, or to appoint a representative to carry out these ends. In his reply he objected that, however excellent the movements, it was a mistake for colleges to introduce into their own well-defined work definite propaganda for a cause not directly related to it. Unlike the subjects taught in the classroom, this would be presented by a carefully chosen *advocate* who came to make converts to a *cause*. The question was expressly taken out of the realm of the advocacy of "women's rights," it being pointed out that the plan would involve a similar proceeding for anti-suffragists, for socialists and anti-socialists, for extremes of temperance advocacy, and for some forms of missionary endeavor. It may be added that in the frequent experiences of the president with all kinds of agitators and advocates he had been repeatedly obliged to enforce this principle before. In reporting this action to the trustees in 1908[1] he said, "There is no limitation put by this principle upon free discussion, but only an effort to hold the College to its special work, and a deprecating of the increase of that agitation in our present college life which is already so great as to leave little room for what, at the students' time

[1] *Report*, p. 24.

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of life, is of greater value than the inculcation of any special views, namely, a broad, calm, scholarly spirit."

At the next annual meeting of the alumnæ, February, 1909, the president of the College discussed the alleged "conservatism" of Vassar, and his address was printed and widely circulated by the Association.[1] It claimed that Vassar had been put on the defensive partly through misunderstanding and partly through misrepresentation. He denied that the attitude assumed by him and approved by the trustees was intended as an expression of any personal views on the issue involved, but stated that it applied to the advocacy of many conflicting opinions and that he was claiming a fair right for the young to time for maturing their powers and increasing the knowledge essential to fair judgment. "It is not the chief mission of an undergraduate to deal with the untried," and the College should "enlighten, broaden, train to careful weighing of evidence, to a scholarly knowledge of facts and the experiences of history, to the testing of theories of what has been already tried, and all as the basis of individual independence in thought and life."

This attitude of the College administration left members of the faculty free to engage in such work for suffrage or against it as they wished, off the campus, and the students free to discuss the subject as much as they wished among themselves, but the life inside the College was preserved from outside advocates as it had always been from those who wished to present propaganda of any sort. Though the activities of a few spread the impression that the excitement was great, the mass of the students under their own leaders, irrespective of their individual opinions, maintained an admirable

[1] See Appendix III.

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poise and wisdom throughout this brief year or two of supreme excitement.[1]

It may be added that the stand thus taken was widely commended by many heads of colleges and universities, and that in many cases action was taken, during these years, by presidents, faculties, and trustees, in the directions here indicated, not in defense of specific opinion, but for the sake of the morale of the institution and the securing of the accomplishment of their own work. That the attitude of Vassar was not merely negative, that its platform was free and not restrained by fear of open discussion of any truths under conditions appropriate to an undergraduate college, was never doubted until the agitation regarding woman-suffrage passed academic limits and bent its energies to the field of the women's colleges as inviting for propaganda.

A survey of the questions discussed before the College in 1886 to 1890, and again in 1913 to 1914, may make this evident. It is certain that such leaders as Susan B. Anthony and Frances Willard, who visited the College in the nineties, expressed emphatically their approval of the breadth of the spirit of the College.

One finds in the early catalogues of this period record of six lectures on Socialism, by Professor Bemis, three on the same topic by Professor R. T. Ely, discussion of the Labor Movements, the Laws of Social Progress, the Railroads, by Professor Bascom (1889-90), two lectures on Economics by President Francis A. Walker, discussions of what the United States has taught the world of representative government, by Albert Bushnell Hart (1890-91), two lectures by President E. B. Andrews on Economic Maladjustments and Socialism, talks on Sta-

[1] *Report* of 1909, p. 10; 1913, p. 17. Address on "Conservatism of Vassar."

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tistics and Village Sanitation, by Carroll D. Wright and Dr. Lucy Hall. It must be remembered, too, that time for these general discussions is limited at a college,—that room must be made for literature, science, art, archæology, and kindred subjects,—for Alfred Russel Wallace, Professor Paulsen, Lanciani, Professor Knight, —for American leaders like Woodrow Wilson, on Democracy,—like Professor Kirchwey, who repeatedly spoke on subjects of most active concern,—for presentation of themes appropriate to the Consumers' League, for specific departmental addresses, such as John Spargo's on Socialism, the Webbs' on Fabianism,—or for the general lectures of Harriet Stanton Blatch on the social conditions in an English village.

In the years especially marked by the question as to whether Vassar was shutting itself out from modern discussions, Talcott Williams talked on the recent elections, Katharine B. Davis on Christianity and the Social Problems, Professor Knight discussed the remaking of the Ohio Constitution, Julia Lathrop the Bureau of Commerce and Labor in relation to Childhood, Dr. Thelberg spoke on Eugenics, Commissioner Biggs on The Care of the Health of a Great City, Professor Fite on Political Science, and Peace and Arbitration were represented by Hamilton Holt and the Baron D'Estournelles de Constant.

All these represented public interest on the part of the College, independent of its active and insistent classroom teaching. Although it set its face against organized propaganda in the College, impartially and as regards every subject, it never neglected the education of young women in matters of public concern, nor relaxed its efforts to arrange courses of instruction in the foundations of the state and the responsibilties of

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citizenship, until in the very meeting in which President Taylor presented his resignation he was able to announce the gift of an endowment for a chair of Political Science, with the definite purpose of educating young women in the theory of the state and the duties of its citizens. Distinctly, Vassar College answered agitation not with argument, but with a determination to train its youth for whatever the future promised of power and responsibility.

Relations to the public interests twice in these years brought the College into conflict with legislative proposals at Albany. The first occasion grew out of a proposition to establish the Sing Sing prison a little south of Poughkeepsie, and so only a few miles from the College. It was thought that the contiguity would become unpleasant and might even lead would-be patrons of the College to question its location for their daughters. The president, with other citizens, appeared before the committee and the bill, possibly never a real menace, was defeated.[1]

More serious was an effort made a year later to remove the Randall's Island Reform School, including among its eight hundred boys many of the worst in the State, to a situation only two or three miles, as the crow flies, from the College. The cottage method of government was proposed. This seemed a threat at once to the peace and safety of the College—and its neighborhood. By letters and telegrams to legislators, by personal appearances before the Senate Committee, by the combined efforts of alumnæ and trustees in various portions of the State, arousing public opinion through the press and members of the Legislature, and finally through the influence of a dreadful outbreak among the boys of the

[1] *Report* of 1907.

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provement of the campus. Two alumnæ gave the College its splendid Chapel, and one its admirable Infirmary, and the Raymond room, the living-room in the Olivia Josselyn Hall, the parlors of several houses, and the guest rooms in Main, are testimonies to a never-ceasing interest on the part of classes and individuals. In the beautiful Memorial Hall of the Chapel and in the great Art Building an alumna shares the gift. There is no department of the college life which has not participated in the benefits of this loyal and efficient love.

As has been already told, the alumnæ gained representation in the Board of Trustees in 1886 and have since elected three members of that body. A fourth alumna has been recently made a member of the board by its own vote. The general tendencies of graduates, so marked in our day, toward a desire to participate in the administration of our colleges, beyond their representation in the boards, are also reflected among the women's colleges. It was determined in 1913 to organize from the Vassar alumnæ a Council which should meet semi-annually at the College and study its conditions, educational and material, and which should consult with the president and the officers of the College in regard to efficient lines of service open to the Association. The expressed aim was to form an avenue for contribution to Vassar from the alumnæ of expert knowledge and interest in educational matters through discussion of the College problems, and to stimulate among the alumnæ generally more intelligent interest in the academic work of the College, its inner life and its needs. By the presence of the alumnæ trustees in its meetings, by joint committees established with faculty and Students' Association, the Council aims to

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be a binding link between the various parts of the larger College.

The project is too new to be treated as history. What the result to the College will be must depend on the spirit of the Council from time to time, and the extent to which it touches the details of College administration. Such associations have made the even government of trustees and faculty almost impossible in some institutions, by their introduction into a semi-official relation to the administration of those without experience in adjustments of many conflicting demands and interests, and have given coveted opportunities to extremists and sometimes to faddists. On the other hand the spirit of loyalty and service in the association of the Vassar alumnæ is a guarantee of the helpfulness of the new council, and a substantial basis for faith in the result of this experiment.[1]

Results

From the beginning for fifty years, the aim of Vassar has been to educate women for life. Part of that purpose has involved the making of scholars, but that has been incidental to the sound, broad, liberal training of women for any, and for every, work to which educated women can be called.

It has made its full number of scholars. Though through most of its history there were almost no incentives to scholarship for women save the love of sound learning, it led many even in its earlier years, and an ever-increasing number in its later history, into a devotion to study and research and thorough intellectual

[1] On some unfortunate tendencies of alumnæ claims, not however ever exhibited at Vassar, *cf.* Dr. Pritchett, *Report of Carnegie Foundation*, 1912, and *President's Report*, Vassar, 1912.

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life. It has given to the work of education college presidents, deans of a considerable number of well-known colleges and universities, many college professors who have made their mark in literature and science, and many able teachers in colleges and assistants in observatories. Its alumnæ have served on school committees, as school commissioners, and as college trustees. Although it has never made special provision for the preparation of teachers and has consistently urged that specific work for that profession should be done in professional schools if American teachers are ever to be properly equipped, it has, nevertheless, furnished a good number of teachers to the schools and many who have conducted schools of note in many States of the Union.

Its graduates have been among the foremost in the various economic and social reforms of the day. One of them will long be remembered as pre-eminent among American women in creating a real domestic science, and she herself was connected with the staff of one of our chief scientific institutions. One has really created a new science of reform and is a commissioner of prisons in our metropolis. One is head of a government bureau, the first woman ever appointed to such a trust. And these are but leaders of a great host who have devoted themselves to social welfare in their cities and towns, and who through churches, societies, clubs, and other organizations have made themselves workers for the world's better life. A careful survey of such women through many years shows a prodigious force at work for moral and social uplift, women inspired directly by their college and trained not only to use their powers efficiently but to believe in the duty of such use.

Nor have these social duties separated these women

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from their homes and from the spheres women have hitherto especially filled. An intimate knowledge, extending over many years, shows that of the thousands of alumnæ the great mass are living in their homes and exerting from them a normal and helpful influence. There is no body of men and women, of any large number, that does not contain abnormal, eccentric, and ill-balanced lives, but this great body of college women has been exceptionally free from the influences that disintegrate and exceptionally strong in applying to life the results of college training. The fears urged on Matthew Vassar have not materialized. Education has not made women less womanly, less social, less attractive, less domestic, less willing to marry and bear children. The normality of the educated woman is one of the lessons Vassar has taught for fifty years.

Other influences, social and economic, have been developing theories that strike at the home and the state and all society as now constituted, and these are vitally affecting the family and all social relations, but despite the fact of occasional excesses of college women, it is from them more than from their less-trained sisters that the forces are emanating that are conserving society and opposing the theories that would destroy it. While education has enlightened and trained, it has also given breadth and balance and faith in the values of life which have proved themselves in the long past.

Vassar bore the brunt of the new movement. For years before a prominent State university admitted women, for ten years before another strong woman's college was started, every challenge as to the possibility of educating women to the man's level, every argument against her physical ability to sustain it, every prejudice that declared it would unsex her, every fear that the

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process would destroy faith, every anticipation that college would undermine devotion to the general interests of a woman's life, was directed against Vassar, and the name long stood for many as the synonym of what one would not wish for girls. And every challenge from the colleges, every distrust as to the thoroughness of a woman's college in comparison with the supposed standards of the colleges for men, every fear that men and women professors would not exact results from girl-students, every expectation that these bodies of girls would develop morbidity and graduate unfitted for a common world, was directed at Vassar. It fought the fight and deserved the priority that history does not strictly accord to it. Years before this was true of any other college, it was making prominent the demand of woman and showing how to meet it; was boldly advocating her claim in the land, was setting standards that could not be gainsaid, and educating teachers for the colleges that were soon to come. Against almost all the world, against unbelief founded on false views of woman and unbelief based on a wrong faith in the superiority of the teaching of men, it quietly, patiently, faithfully worked on, very slowly at last gaining a recognition from colleges and universities that it had long before deserved because of its honest quality and its thoroughness of work. No other woman's college had to bear so much because Vassar had done its work; no other had to plead so long for recognition because Vassar had won its battle.

The dream of Matthew Vassar was more than fulfilled. He gave women the opportunities to which they had always had the right. He devoted all he had to a cause in which there was no general faith,—but he believed—and his faith has been justified.

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THE CHAPEL CLOISTERS

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

CHARTER—AN ACT TO INCORPORATE VASSAR FEMALE COLLEGE

PASSED JANUARY 18, 1861

The people of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Matthew Vassar, Ira Harris, William Kelly, James Harper, Martin B. Anderson, John Thompson, Edward Lathrop, Charles W. Swift, E. L. Magoon, S. M. Buckingham, Milo P. Jewett, Nathan Bishop, Matthew Vassar, Jr., Benson J. Lossing, E. G. Robinson, Samuel F. B. Morse, S. S. Constant, John Guy Vassar, William Hague, Rufus Babcock, Cornelius Dubois, John H. Raymond, Morgan L. Smith, Cyrus Swan, George W. Sterling, George T. Pierce, Smith Sheldon, Joseph C. Doughty and A. L. Allen, are hereby constituted a body corporate, by the name of "Vassar Female College," to be located in Dutchess county, near the city of Poughkeepsie. By that name the said corporation shall have perpetual succession, with power to fill vacancies as they may occur from time to time in their board, to sue and be sued, to contract and be contracted with, to make and use a common seal and to alter the same at pleasure, to purchase, take and hold, by gift, grant or devise, subject to "An Act relating to Wills," passed April 13, 1860, except in the case of Matthew Vassar, herein named, and to dispose of, any real and personal property, the yearly income or revenue of which shall not exceed the value of forty thousand dollars.

2. The object and purpose of said corporation are hereby declared to be, to promote the education of young women in literature, science, and the arts.

3. The College may grant to students under its charge diplomas or honorary testimonials, in such form as it may designate. It may also grant and confer such honors, degrees, and diplomas as

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are granted by any university, college, or seminary of learning in the United States.

4. Diplomas granted by the College shall entitle the possessors to the immunities and privileges allowed by usage or statute to the possessors of like diplomas from any university, college, or seminary of learning in this State.

5. The persons named in the first section of this act shall be the first trustees of the said corporation. The president of the College, while holding office, shall be a member of the board of trustees.

6. Nine trustees shall be a quorum for the transaction of business; but no real estate shall be bought or sold, and no president or professor of the College shall be appointed or removed, except by the affirmative vote of a majority of all the trustees.

7. The corporation shall have all such powers, and be subject to such duties and liabilities as are applicable to colleges, and are specified or contained in the second and fifth articles of the first title of the fifteenth chapter of the first part of the revised statutes, and in title third, chapter eighteen of the same part of the revised statutes, except so far as the same are inconsistent with the provisions of this act.

8. Matthew Vassar, of Poughkeepsie, is hereby authorized and empowered to give, grant, devise, and bequeath to the aforesaid corporation, by his last will and testament, or otherwise, any such portion of his estate as he may choose so to give, grant, devise, or bequeath, any existing act or statute to the contrary notwithstanding.

9. This act shall take effect immediately.

AMENDMENTS

I

PASSED FEBRUARY 1, 1867

1. The corporate name of "Vassar Female College," a college incorporated by Chapter 2 of Session Laws of 1861, is hereby changed to "Vassar College," by which name it shall hereafter be called and known.

2. This act shall in no wise affect said act of incorporation except in the name; nor shall it affect any rights or powers of

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the Vassar Female College; nor shall it impair or affect any claim or demand against it, or any of its liabilities.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

II

Became Law April 2, 1903

1. Amends Chapter 2 of the Laws of 1861, and authorizes said corporation (Vassar College) "To take and hold in fee simple, or any less estate, by gift, grant, devise, bequest, or otherwise, subject to 'An Act relating to Wills,' passed April 13, 1860 . . . and to dispose of lands, tenements, or other estate real or personal to such an amount as may be or become necessary for the proper conduct and support of the several departments of education hereby established or hereafter to be established by its Board of Trustees, and such property real or personal as has been given or may hereafter be given to said corporation by gift, grant, devise, or bequest, in trust or otherwise, for the uses and purposes permitted by its charter, or by the general laws of the State."

Charter Trustees

Matthew Vassar, Esq.
Hon. Ira Harris.
Hon. William Kelly.
Hon. James Harper.
Martin B. Anderson, LL.D.
Hon. John Thompson.
Rev. Edward Lathrop, D.D.
Hon. Charles W. Swift.
Rev. Elias L. Magoon, D.D.
Stephen M. Buckingham, Esq.
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Nathan Bishop, LL.D.
Matthew Vassar, Jr., Esq.
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Samuel F. B. Morse, LL.D.
Samuel S. Constant, Esq.
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Rev. William Hague, D.D.
Rev. Rufus Babcock, D.D.
Cornelius Dubois, Esq.
John H. Raymond, LL.D.
Morgan L. Smith, Esq.
Cyrus Swan, Esq.
Hon. George W. Sterling.
Hon. George T. Pierce.
Smith Sheldon, Esq.
Joseph C. Doughty, Esq.
Augustus L. Allen, Esq.

APPENDIX II

MATTHEW VASSAR'S FIRST ADDRESS TO THE TRUSTEES OF VASSAR COLLEGE

February 26, 1861.

GENTLEMEN: As my long-cherished purpose to apply a large portion of my estate to some benevolent object is now about to be accomplished, it seems proper that I should submit to you a statement of my motives, views, and wishes.

It having pleased God that I should have no descendants to inherit my property, it has long been my desire, after suitably providing for those of my kindred who have claims on me, to make such a disposition of my means as should best honor God and benefit my fellowmen. At different periods I have regarded various plans with favor; but these have all been dismissed one after another, until the subject of erecting and endowing a college for the education of young women was presented for my consideration. The novelty, grandeur, and benignity of the idea arrested my attention. The more carefully I examined it, the more strongly it commended itself to my judgment and interested my feelings.

It occurred to me that woman, having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development.

I considered that the mothers of a country mold the character of its citizens, determine its institutions, and shape its destiny.

Next to the influence of the mother is that of the female teacher, who is employed to train young children at a period when impressions are most vivid and lasting.

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It also seemed to me that, if woman were properly educated, some new avenues to useful and honorable employment, in entire harmony with the gentleness and modesty of her sex, might be opened to her.

It further appeared, there is not in our country, there is not in the world, so far as is known, a single fully-endowed institution for the education of women.

It was also in evidence that, for the last thirty years, the standard of education for the sex has been constantly rising in the United States; and the great, felt, pressing want has been ample endowments, to secure to Female Seminaries the elevated character, the stability and permanency of our best Colleges.

And now, gentlemen, influenced by these and similar considerations, after devoting my best powers to the study of the subject for a number of years past; after duly weighing the objections against it and the arguments that preponderate in its favor; and the project having received the warmest commendations of many prominent literary men and practical educators, as well as the universal approval of the public press, I have come to the conclusion, that the establishment and endowment of a College for the education of young women is a work which will satisfy my highest aspirations, and will be, under God, a rich blessing to this city and State, to our country and the world.

It is my hope to be the instrument, in the hand of Providence, of founding and perpetuating an Institution which shall accomplish for young women what our colleges are accomplishing for young men.

In pursuance of this design, I have obtained from the Legislature an act of incorporation, conferring on the proposed Seminary the corporate title of "Vassar Female College," and naming you, gentlemen, as the first Trustees. Under the provisions of this charter you are invested with all the powers, privileges, and immunities which appertain to any College or University in this State.

To be somewhat more specific in the statement of my views as to the character and aims of the College:

I wish that the course of study should embrace, at least, the following particulars: The English Language and its Literature; other Modern Languages; the Ancient Classics, so far as may be

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demanded by the spirit of the times; the Mathematics, to such an extent as may be deemed advisable; all the branches of Natural Science, with full apparatus, cabinets, collections, and conservatories for visible illustration; Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene, with practical reference to the laws of the health of the sex; Intellectual Philosophy; the elements of Political Economy; some knowledge of the Federal and State Constitutions and Laws; Moral Science, particularly as bearing on the filial, conjugal, and parental relations; Æsthetics, as treating of the beautiful in Nature and Art, and to be illustrated by an extensive Gallery of Art; Domestic Economy, practically taught, so far as is possible, in order to prepare graduates readily to become skillful housekeepers; last, and most important of all, the daily, systematic Reading and Study of the Holy Scriptures, as the only and all-sufficient Rule of Christian faith and practice.

All sectarian influences should be carefully excluded; but the training of our students should never be intrusted to the skeptical, the irreligious, or the immoral.

In forming the first Board of Trustees, I have selected representatives from the principal Christian denominations among us; and in filling the vacancies which may occur in this body, as also in appointing the Professors, Teachers, and other Officers of the College, I trust a like catholic spirit will always govern the Trustees.

It is not my purpose to make Vassar Female College a charity school, whose advantages shall be free to all without charge; for benefits so cheaply obtained are cheaply held; but it is believed the funds of the Institution will enable it to offer to all the highest educational facilities at a moderate expense, as compared with the cost of instruction in existing seminaries. I earnestly hope the funds will also prove sufficient to warrant the gratuitous admission of a considerable number of indigent students, annually—at least, by regarding the amount remitted, in most cases, as a loan, to be subsequently repaid from the avails of teaching, or otherwise. Preference should be given to beneficiaries of decided promise—such as are likely to distinguish themselves in some particular department or pursuit—and especially to those who propose to engage in the teaching of the young as a profession.

I desire that the College may be provided with commodious

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buildings, containing ample apartments for public instruction, and at the same time affording to the inmates the safety, quiet, privacy, and purity of the family.

And now, gentlemen of the Board of Trustees, I transfer to your possession and ownership the real and personal property which I have set apart for the accomplishment of my designs. I beg permission to add a brief and general expression of my views in regard to the most judicious use and management of the funds.

After the College edifice has been erected, and furnished with all needful aids and appliances for imparting the most perfect education of body, mind, and heart, it is my judgment and wish that the amount remaining in hand should be safely invested—to remain as a principal, only the annual income of which should be expended in the preservation of the buildings and grounds; the support of the faculty; the replenishing and enlarging of the library, cabinet, art-gallery, etc., and in adding to the capital on hand; so that the College, instead of being impoverished, and tending to decay from year to year, shall always contain within itself the elements of growth and expansion, of increasing power, prosperity, and usefulness.

In conclusion, gentlemen, this enterprise, which I regard as the last great work of my life, I commit to you as a sacred trust, which I feel assured you will discharge with fidelity and uprightness, with wisdom and prudence, with ability and energy.

It is my fervent desire that I may live to see the Institution in successful operation; and if God shall give me life and strength, I shall gladly employ my best faculties in co-operating with you, to secure the full and perfect consummation of the work before us.

APPENDIX III

Letters and Documents relating to President Taylor's Administration

President Taylor's Letter to the Trustees of Brown University

To the Reverend Alvah Hovey, D.D., *Chairman.*

Dear Sir:

I have given careful consideration to the call extended to me by the corporation of Brown University, and have examined both sides of the question suggested to me with all the wisdom

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I could gain. In allowing my name to be presented to your board we agreed "that my acceptance of this honor from your committee would be an intimation on my part of a disposition to consider favorably an election by the corporation—but that it would not be construed as a pledge of a final affirmative decision, since I am not at liberty, upon my understanding, to broach the question to my own trustees and alumnæ and other friends of Vassar until after the election." From the day of my election till now I have therefore sought the counsel of friends of both institutions, and have attempted with their aid to make clear to myself the path of duty.

I have most deeply appreciated the honor done me by the corporation. My very high estimate of the work and worth of Brown University, and of the possibilities before it, the cordial assurance of welcome given me by the trustees and faculty, the alumni and students, and the rare opportunities of usefulness offered by the situation and influence of the University, have combined to attract me to it.

As I have deliberated upon the issues at stake, however, through these weeks, I have been impressed, with increasing force, that these conditions are overbalanced by the interests which would be imperiled by my leaving my present office. This conclusion has been reached slowly under the influence of a weight of assurance from the trustees, faculty, alumnæ, and students of Vassar, and friends of education unrelated to Vassar, that I cannot set aside. I have been made to feel that the resignation of my duties here would be construed by most observers, despite my own honest protest, as an assertion that the type of work for which Vassar stands is of less importance than that of a college mainly devoted to men. I have been convinced, against my earlier judgment, that the chances of disintegration which come with every change would be very grave, just now, for Vassar, and that her work might be hindered for years, at least till a new leader should have gained the confidence of the College and its alumnæ. I have been persuaded, too, that in the present juncture, where new problems as to the very nature of woman's education are being raised, the presence of one here who has had long experience in the work, and knows its interests and its limitations, may be of grave importance. It has seemed to me, too, that there are more men willing to give their best service

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to the education of men than there are to give a like earnest service for woman's education. I have been convinced, also, that the position offered me would present no greater opportunity for usefulness than that I now hold. The chance of directly influencing the life of one's time through the young men of a great college is alluring, but indirectly, and in an increasing degree directly, the influence of the educated woman in the home, the school, the church, the state, and society can hardly be accounted as holding the second place. In this conclusion I have been sustained by a large number of men unrelated to either institution.

The value of a continuous work, and of a tradition well established, the risks of a change to a college already beloved and to which the best of my life has been given, the danger of casting a reflection on a work which I believe to be of equal worth with the worthiest, the attraction of developing plans already formed on the basis of what has been accomplished, have outweighed the great attractions of the place tendered me, and the more than kind assurance of unanimous support from the corporation, faculty, and alumni of Brown. I can never cease to have a deep affection for the institution which has so honored me. My only regret is that I have been compelled by this growing conviction of duty to disappoint your hope. I anticipate great prosperity for Brown, and trust that it may soon obtain a president who shall lead the university more ably and successfully than I could have hoped to do.

With assurances of highest regard and gratitude, I am yours respectfully,

JAMES M. TAYLOR.

March 1, 1899.

President Taylor's Letter to the Trustees of Vassar College

MY DEAR FRIENDS:

I wish to consult with you regarding my resignation of the great trust committed to me by the Board in 1886. Our relations have been so unbroken in co-operation and friendship that I cannot send you a merely formal renunciation of my privileges and powers.

My desire is to give up my duties permanently within a year. If for reasons I shall suggest you find it desirable that I remain so long, I shall ask you to consider my labors ended with the

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first semester, February 2, 1914. My reasons for this step and the grounds of my judgment that I should take it now, are as follows:

By the first week in March I shall have had forty years of public service. All of it has been arduous,—thirteen years in two pastorates,—twenty-seven years, June first, in my present position. I need not tell you that these college years have involved incessant strain, and exacting and exhausting care. Beside the responsibility involved in the transition from a small college to a large one,—business, financial, educational, administrative, social,—I have had charge of its religious interests, and have held a professorship from the beginning until now. The demands upon us from without, I need not tell you, have grown steadily with the years. May I not be excused for shrinking from the extension or continuance of the responsibility?

To my mind it seems better for the College and for me that I resign before the years become oppressive, or before it is thought that my age is rendering me less responsive to my duties and opportunities.

The advantages to the College in a change are that a new régime, if a wise one, will bring fresh impulse to our work,—that the president will travel more, will visit oftener the associations of the alumnæ and the schools, will awaken fresh interests, and bring increased and much needed endowments to the College.

I have thought much over the question of my remaining, should you wish it, till the fiftieth anniversary, in the fall of 1915, but my reflection has only confirmed my judgment that I should terminate my service within a year unless I am willing to assume the responsibility for the preparations for what should be a great occasion. The plans should be formed by those who are to carry them through. The effort for enlarged endowments should be part of the scheme and I do not find myself willing to assume the burden of that. Moreover, it would seem to me disadvantageous for the College and the new administration if I should continue in office and resign synchronously with the celebration. The new administration would itself acquire great advantages by the large acquaintance with visiting colleges gained at that time and the exaltation of the anniversary would react for its good.

This review of the case makes clear to me that the interests

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of the College call for my resignation, and my own inclination to gain a little rest and leisure after forty years of active service, supports the claim. I repeat therefore my wish to resign,—but if my leaving earlier would embarrass your plans, either because you wish my experience in introducing our new scheme of social and educational administration, or because in case of my going sooner you would have no provision for carrying the course of ethics with the seniors next year, I shall adapt my plans to meet your wishes, and not retire until February 2d, 1914.

I need say nothing to you of what this step must mean to me. Though only two or three of the present Board were members of it when I took office, we have all been closely associated in a great work, and through all these years no friction has worried us and no sharp differences of policy have divided us. It has been my singular happiness to work with a body of men and women who have always set the interests of the College above every personal consideration, and who have therefore worked together harmoniously and successfully. I congratulate you on the largeness of the opportunity given to you. No other can ever be so near my own heart or so move my prayers on its behalf.

I accepted your invitation to become President on the twenty-first of April, 1886. I made no promise and no prophecies beyond my simple pledge to give to this work all the powers I possessed. I have endeavored to fulfill that pledge and I return to you the trust with every hope that you may secure a successor worthy of your co-operation in advancing the interests of Vassar College.

With affection and respect,

I am faithfully yours,

February 13, 1913. JAMES M. TAYLOR.

THE "CONSERVATISM" OF VASSAR

Address by President Taylor at the Annual Meeting of the Alumnæ, 1909

Partly through misunderstanding, partly through misrepresentation, Vassar College has been put upon the defensive as regards its stand toward the progressive movements of the day. So far as I can represent the College and its spirit, its trustees, alumnæ, and its growing constituency, it seems to me desirable that I

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should say to you at your annual meeting what may serve to clarify the position of the College.

No one is always right. Conservatism may be blind, radicalism may be presumptuous, and both may miss the truth. It is only an unthinking conservatism that is unworthy of respect, and as little worthy is unthinking radicalism. Let us recognize the fact that both, in sound development, are essential to real progress, that things are not true because they are new, nor because they are old, but that there is always something to be said for ideas and methods that have proved useful to mankind for generations. I resent for one the imputation that one is not thinking and reading and is not abreast the best thought unless he is chiming in with the latest novelties of social reform, or because he is unwilling to commit himself to particular fashions of social procedure. Recognizing, as I do, the need of radicals and the need of conservatives, I resent as narrow and unscholarly the notion that an intelligent radical is one whit worthier than an intelligent conservative. Truth is mightier than either, and there is little need of our putting out our hands to steady the ark of God.

This succinct statement has its particular application to our College in its present stand. It needs to be said, because of persistent misrepresentation, that my view as to the relation of the College to such matters does not depend upon my view of the special truth or reform concerned. Consider our position in a time of such seething, unsettled, and lawless thinking as today. I have been told that one man cannot do the thinking for all any more. One hardly needs that information from outside critics after twenty-two years' experience with the alumnæ of Vassar, who are trained to think for themselves and say what they think, *but he may think with them and he may express their thought.* Suppose now that every explorer of new views and every adherent of new isms have a chance at will to attack these young and comparatively inexperienced minds. What result will you look for? Do you think it is only *one* cause, *your cause* perhaps? That is farthest from the truth. Now it is suffrage and now anti-suffrage, now it is the socialists, now it is the Women's Christian Temperance Union, now some missionary cause like the special claim of the women students of Tokyo, now the Student Volunteer Movement, now some highly commended evangelist, now the agnostic who wishes to enlighten the superstitious mind. In

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short, everyone that has a cause wishes naturally to get at our young people, and in turn if one resists and holds to a belief in a steady development and training to fit one to examine every cause, to "prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good," then one must expect to meet in turn the accusations of a lack of interest and breadth, now in political reform, now in social reform, and now, alas, also in religion. These people are for the most part not teachers but agitators, not expounders but advocates. I submit that education, plain old-fashioned preparatory education, opening up all of these questions but under the influence of the spirit of teaching and investigation, and not of agitation, has some claim upon the undergraduate mind, and I add, as I said in my report, that to my mind there is a claim of fairness to the young involved in this whole procedure. That is not wise nor even honest education which attempts a superstructure on an ill-built foundation, because it cannot be patient enough to build for a while even out of sight. It is precisely the fallacy which we have hitherto agreed in withstanding at Vassar,—the plea to enter upon specific education,—professional or domestic, before we have laid a broad and liberal foundation. Making premature reformers is no whit better, educationally, than making premature teachers and lawyers and preachers and domestic scientists.

What is it we want when we consider the work of an undergraduate college?

The chief mission of the college is to train the young, not for special fields of work or any special theories of reform, but to enlighten and broaden and inspire, to train to the careful weighing of evidence, to the scholarly knowledge of facts and the experiences of history, to the testing of theories of what has been already tried, and all as the basis for individual independence in thought and life. It is not the chief mission of an undergraduate to deal with the untried.

I appeal confidently to those who have gone on into careers of scholarship as to the effect of this method.

I appeal as well to the evidence, as the history of Vassar College has shown it, of the effect of such training on those who are called to various pursuits of life. The careers of our alumnæ justify our methods.

Again, Vassar College recognizes all good service as worthy.

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It scouts the common opinion of the agitator that the best life is in the public eye. It does not love notoriety for the undergraduate, and declares it to be unhealthful, intellectually and socially. It cries out against the tendency to put the tag of social service *only* on a service which has a committee and a board and public meetings and newspapers behind it. It recognizes the admirable quality of most of this social service, but it demands as well the recognition of the usefulness of the common life. It affirms its belief in the home and in the old-fashioned view of marriage and children and the splendid service of society wrought through these quiet and unradical means. It believes in the teacher and the school and the church *as well as in* all other means of philanthropy and social betterment.

Once more, Vassar recognizes the right of everyone to do her own thinking, and her *right* to *withhold the results* till she knows what she thinks. It *encourages* this reticence in the young. It believes that education, if worth anything, means fairness and balance rather than excess. Especially in an age like ours, so ready to run after every new thing, it urges the full and calm consideration of every new scheme and insists that if educated men and women cannot hold the balance, education is proved useless and a waste.

Finally, the single purpose of Vassar College is to maintain and advance the standards for the education of young women, and it is not to be led aside from this by any of the alluring or insistent demands of the service or reforms which are better suited to the mature than to those in the process of education. It reiterates what President Raymond said in 1875, after ten years of work and in the midst of questions and agitations reminding us of to-day:

"The Institution was not founded and is not administered in the interest of any doctrine or class of doctrines. Its business is education in the broadest sense, and exclusively that, so to develop and discipline the faculties of the young that they shall be able in due time to form their own opinions and to understand and explain the grounds on which these opinions rest." He adds, "the mission of Vassar College was not to reform society but to educate women."

That, just that, is the Conservatism of Vassar. It means to attend to the undergraduate education of young women.

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The Report of the Committee on the Reorganization of the Education Departments

The committee has held two extended meetings in New York, one on the 14th of December and one on the 4th of May. Between the two dates a sub-committee worked carefully over the recommendations of the general committee, dealing with the questions of detail which arose and reporting finally to the general committee. The report of that committee, adopted unanimously, is herewith submitted to the Board.

We recommend the appointment of a Head Warden in place of the Lady Principal, and of Associate Wardens, to whom shall be committed the headship of the various houses of residence, the Head Warden having control of Main; the Head Warden and Associate Wardens forming a committee which shall hold stated meetings and adopt the general rules under which the various houses shall be conducted. Your committee has taken under full discussion the name of this officer and the objections to it that may be urged in our American life, but it has found no other name, and it reminds the Board that Warden is a title closely associated with educational life in England and that it has been making steady progress in this country as a title for an office similar to that contemplated.

Your committee further recommends the placing of the administrative portion of the educational work in the hands of a Dean who will be responsible to the President of the College.

We recommend that each warden shall have full responsibility for her house. She shall act, however, within the scope of the regulations bearing upon all matters of permissions, excuses, and liberties of the students, guests, visitors to rooms, etc., as established by the committee of the head warden and associate wardens. The head warden shall have the power of suspensive veto over the legislation of this committee pending an appeal to the President of the College.

Such clerical work as may be essential for the keeping and correlating of the records and for the general unity of the work, shall be assigned by the head warden to the various associates. The discussion of such assignment should be open to the whole committee, care being taken to equalize the amount of the service rendered by the different heads of houses, but the ultimate decision

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should be with the head warden and should be made in the interest of the work as a whole. This work should be performed, as may be deemed more desirable, either in the offices of the head warden or in the offices of the associate wardens in the several houses.

The general correspondence regarding students, so far as it pertains to social matters, shall be carried on by the associate wardens of the respective houses in conference with the head warden, but all questions of discipline shall be treated by the head warden, after such consultation with the associates regarding students in other houses than Main, as may be necessary. All important matters of discipline must be referred as now to the President of the College.

The head warden shall have charge of the entertainment of all guests of the College and the direction of the guest tables. She shall be chairman of the committee of these officers who shall be expected to hold frequent meetings for consultation regarding the students and their interests. The head warden shall have entire responsibility for the Main Building with an assistant under her direction. She shall represent the committee of associate wardens in the faculty and have the vote which is now the right of the Lady Principal. Her rank shall be that of professor. The associate wardens shall be admitted to the meetings of the faculty but without the right of a vote.

Your committee has in mind for these positions women fitted to be social heads of our houses and counselors of our students, interested in their moral and spiritual welfare, and with tact and skill in dealing with the problems of this nature which are continually arising in student life, but understanding these in a broad and liberal way. They should serve as examples and inspirations to the students associated with them, toward faithfulness in their allotted work, and toward a broader outlook of intellectual and social culture. We have in mind women who are fitted to set the standards of cultivated social life which are so much needed everywhere among young people of our time, but women also of broad intellectual interests who are adapted to the peculiar life of a college. If it seems to your committee that it will be difficult to fill seven such places, we can only respond that it is difficult to fill any place of high standing, and that yet we are continually making worthy approximation toward

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that in our institutions. We cannot hope for perfection but we can struggle toward it. We believe that the announcement of such an ideal as we have here sketched will be of value to those who desire the appointment as well as to those who are appointed.

We wish to add, after sketching our ideal, that we think independence should be emphasized for these associate wardens as far as possible within the limits of their common and similar responsibilities. The women we are seeking for must not be too much hampered by restrictions and formalities. The difficult, subtle, and invaluable service to be done must be due largely to the force of example. Womanliness, unselfishness, courtesy, grace are not to be inculcated by mere precept. The broader the culture and the larger the life of these women the greater will be the promise to the students of the College, and no accomplishment and no intellectual or spiritual interest possessed by any one of them can fail of its mission. Different as these women may be among themselves, none of them should be the type we would not wish our daughters to be. Our attention has been called in this connection to the spirit of the English schools where "The House" is constantly presented to the students as a "personality," and where their loyalty is drawn out for it rather than for "The Master." The friendly rivalry of houses in all matters that pertain to a cultivated life would accomplish fine results.

Whether or not the wardens might share in the work of teaching is a question that might be left to experience. The connection with classroom work might well be a bond between warden and student. On the other hand, the adjustment of the warden's uncertain hours to an academic schedule might prove too difficult, and the absorbing work of a classroom draw her too far from the chief service for which she is appointed. Your committee is of the opinion that there will be no lack of employment for these women if, in addition to the routine work essential in their offices, there is present a personal intellectual ambition as well as that earnest missionary spirit that is essential to all best service.

Your committee is, therefore, of the opinion that while each warden should have general oversight of all the conditions existent in her house, she can have the authority, in conformity with our

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present business organization, to make direct recommendations only regarding the housekeeping and the table. Her relations in these respects should be officially with the Director of Halls, although by tact and kindliness she would undoubtedly secure, in all ordinary cases, the ends in view without an appeal beyond the housekeeper of her specific hall.

Your committee recommends that the office of the dean shall have the administrative direction of all academic questions, including the correspondence with schools, parents, and candidates on the educational side. The responsibility of the dean should be directly to the President of the College. She should, however, be responsible to carry out the legislation enacted by the faculty and should be accessible to any suggestions from members of the teaching force. She should hold all necessary interviews with students bearing on their academic work and all absences from classes should be reported to her office. The purpose of the trustees in this legislation would be to make as distinct as possible the care of the special educational work from that of the social life of the College, but since the two bear so closely upon one another it would be desirable that all complaints made by members of the faculty regarding the influence of the social upon the educational life, and all such closely related questions as arise in the office of the head warden or in the office of the dean, should be settled in conference of these two officers, with power of appeal to the President. The intention of the committee is that the dean should have more time given her than the present secretary has for interviews with students and for advice to them in their academic work.

The dean should be furnished with all necessary assistants to carry on also the work ordinarily pertaining to the Registrar's Office, the preparation of schedules, reports, etc., and all other duties pertaining to this side of the work of the present secretary.

The rank of the dean should be that of full professor.

In the event of any unforeseen difficulties of adjustment between the offices of the dean and head warden the President should be the arbitrator, with appeal if necessary to the Committee on Faculty and Studies. The official relation of the dean, however, to all matters pertaining to the office of the warden should be with the head warden and not with the associates.

Your committee recommends that this scheme shall go into full

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operation in the fall of 1913, and that all possible steps toward it shall be taken during the coming year, in full consultation and advisement with the Lady Principal.

June, 11, 1912.

APPENDIX IV

Financial Summary for 1875 and 1914

July 1, 1875

Unproductive Property—

Real Estate

College farm and farm buildings	$ 50,000.00
Main College building	328,415.10
Museum building	73,151.16
Laundry building	13,609.83
Observatory building	6,040.85
Boiler-house and gas-works	37,410.46
Gate-lodge	6,684.00
Total	$515,311.40

Furniture and Apparatus

Furniture and fixtures	$67,122.80
College Library	13,370.74
Art Gallery	31,805.86
Musical instruments	12,100.00
Chemical, philosophical, anatomical, and mathematical apparatus	7,748.97
Astronomical apparatus	8,308.44
Total	$140,456.81

Cabinets

Ornithology	$6,615.00
Zoology	4,667.41
Geology and Mineralogy	9,900.00
Total	$21,182.41
Aggregate of unproductive property	$676,950.62

Productive Property—

Lecture Fund	$50,000.00
Auxiliary Fund	50,000.00
Library, Art, and Cabinet Fund	50,000.00
Repair Fund	119,350.00
Fox Memorial Scholarship	6,000.00
Aggregate of productive property	$275,350.00
Total of unproductive and productive property	$952,300.62

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JULY 1, 1914

Unproductive Property—		
Real Estate[1]		$3,029,764.54
Library	$187,974.00	
Museum	6,318.00	
Apparatus	99,513.55	
Furniture	123,450.99	
Other property[2]	37,998.84	455,255.38
		$3,485,019.92
Productive Property—		
Endowments	$1,164,722.05	
Scholarships and Fellowships	408,663.16	
Special	60,061.60	$1,633,446.81
Total of unproductive and productive property		$5,118,466.73

APPENDIX V

PARTIAL LIST OF SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF VASSAR COLLEGE

(a) *Books*

Blake, S. J.
Visit to Some American Schools and Colleges.
London, 1867.

Broome, E. C.
A Historical and Critical Discussion of College Admission Requirements.
New York: Macmillan, 1903.

Hunt, Caroline L.
The Life of Ellen H. Richards.
Boston: Whitcomb and Barrons, 1912.

Kendall, P. M.
Maria Mitchell. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1896.

Life and Letters of John Howard Raymond, edited by his daughter.
New York: Fords, Howard and Hulbert, 1881.

Lossing, Benson J.
Vassar College and Its Founder.
New York: C. A. Alvord, 1867.

[1] Before this date Taylor Hall and the Metcalf Pavilion had also been given.

[2] No estimate has yet been made of the present Art Collection.

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